

WILD WEST



A MAGAZINE CONTAINING STORIES, SKETCHES Etc. OF WESTERN LIFE.

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$1.50 per year. Application made for Second Class Entry at the N. Y. Post Office.

No. 183.

NEW YORK, APRIL 20, 1906.

Price 5 Cents.

YOUNG WILD WEST'S SILVER SCOOP; OR, CLEANING UP A HUNDRED THOUSAND.

By AN OLD SCOUT



As Will was in the act of cracking the lump of ore the sound of footsteps came to their ears. The next instant Dan Glick and two of his men appeared, ready for fight. "Here's where you die!" he exclaimed.

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Young Wild West's Silver Scoop

OR,

Cleaning Up a Hundred Thousand

BY AN OLD SCOUT.

CHAPTER I.

WILD BUYS A SILVER MINE.

"I want ter see ther galoot what calls himself Young Wild West! I heard he'd jest arrove in ther camp an' was stoppin' here at ther Silver Bullet Tavern. If any-one kin p'int him out, jest do it quick, or I'll git mad an' begin ter let lead fly! I'm on a regular spree, an' my money's gittin mighty low. I must have more! Where's this here Young Wild West? Speak quick, now!"

The speaker was a tall man, who, by his looks, was a miner. His face was bearded and his small black eyes had a glitter in them that told quite plainly that he had a way of doing things the way he wanted to and took advice from no man.

As he uttered the words just recorded he strode up to the little bar of the tavern that was located in about the center of the mining camp called Silver Bullet, in Larimer county, Colorado.

At the time of which we write that part of the country, though not a great many miles from the city of Denver, was in a pretty lawless state.

Silver Bullet was one of the liveliest mining camps in the northern part of the Centennial State, though its population—nearly entirely male—numbered less than two hundred.

To emphasize what he said, the miner who had entered so abruptly brought the handle of a big bowie knife down on the bar with such force as to dent the soft pine wood it was constructed of.

There were not less than a dozen occupants of the big square room at the time, and every eye was turned upon him in a twinkling.

"I guess I am the fellow you want to see," promptly retorted a handsome, athletic boy, who was attired in a fancy hunting-suit of buckskin and wore a wealth of long chestnut hair hanging over his broad, shapely shoulders.

He stepped forward as he spoke and faced the rough-spoken man in a way that was nothing if not cool and deliberate.

"You!" roared the miner, giving the bar another bang with the handle of his knife; "why, you're only a youngster dressed in fancy style ter go out an' hunt bears, an' never hit a thing yer shoot at! You're altogether too young an' innercent ter be ther galoot I'm lookin' fur. My name is Dan Glick, an' I want ter see Young Wild West, ther man what was askin' someone less than an hour ago if there was any minin' property ter be sold cheap in this rip-roarin' old camp."

"Well, sir, I am just the fellow you want, then. I am Young Wild West."

The boy smiled as he spoke and seemed to regard the man as one who was trying to have a little joke more than anything else.

"You—are—Young Wild West, hey?"

Dan Glick spoke the words slowly and with great emphasis.

"That is just who I am, sir. What do you want with me?"

The miner's face broke into a grin, and, stepping back a pace, he squirted a mouthful of tobacco juice at the feet of the dashing-looking boy.

But the boy got his feet out of the way and escaped it, and then, as quick as a flash, he struck Bill Glick a stinging blow across the mouth with the back of his hand.

"Wow!"

A simultaneous cry of surprise went up from the half a dozen cowboys who were drinking at the bar.

"Anyone who spits tobacco juice at me generally gets hit right where it comes from, Mr. Glick," said Young Wild West. "If you don't like it, just say the word, and I will try to knock the sting of the blow from your mouth!"

If those in the room had been surprised before, they were amazed now.

The dashing-looking boy with the flowing hair had proved that he knew how to handle himself, and the coolness and courage displayed by him beat anything they had ever seen.

Dan Glick staggered back when he received the blow in the mouth.

It was evident that he was so astounded that he could not find the use of his tongue or of any of the muscles of his body for a second or two, for he stood like a statue, his small black eyes glittering like those of a snake.

When he did recover an oath came from his lips, and, like a catamount, he bounded for the boy, the gleaming bowie he had been pounding the bar with raised to cut him down.

But Young Wild West was expecting something like that.

He stepped quickly to the right and out shot his left fist.

Spat!

Dan Glick caught it squarely between the eyes.

As he was rushing to meet the blow when it hit him he got it with all the more force.

The boy's arm seemed to be made of iron, for when the blow landed it never bent a particle.

Down went the miner in a heap.

He still clutched his knife, however, but with a well-directed kick Young Wild West sent it flying across the room.

"Dan Glick," said he, coolly folding his arms as he stood over the fallen man, "I want you to understand that, though I am only a boy, as you said a little while ago, I can whip a stagecoach load of such fellows as you are! Now, you take my advice and don't look any further for satisfaction, for if you do I may hurt, and perhaps kill you. I mean what I say!"

"I'm through, young feller," said Glick, for the blow had made him see stars and his brain was still whirling.

"All right. I'll take you at your word. Come; get up! You are not hurt much, I guess. If I had hit you with my right fist I might have disjointed your neck, but it was only the left. Up with you, now!"

He had seized the man by the shoulders, and with the greatest of ease he swung him upward and on his feet.

The miner was awed by this, for it struck him that the

boy was possessed of wonderful strength, as well as quickness and skill.

He leaned against the bar to collect his scattered senses.

Young Wild West turned to a tall, straight man, with long black hair and mustache, and a boy about his own age, who were standing near the door that opened into the rear room of the tavern and had been interested spectators of the scene.

They were attired in similar style to the cool young fellow who had so easily conquered the big miner, and by their manner when he approached them it was plain that they were his friends.

And so they were—not only his true friends, but partners in business and travel.

The tall man was Cheyenne Charlie, the famous scout and Indian fighter, who had put in several years' service with the government, and Jim Dart, a boy who had been born and reared on the border.

Young Wild West, the intrepid fighter for the right, protector of those who could not help themselves, young scout, Prince of the Saddle and Champion Deadshot of the West, had two friends who were just the right sort to follow his lead anywhere.

Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart never questioned anything that the boy said or did.

He was a born leader, it seemed, and his judgment always right.

Though but a boy in years, he was a man in every other sense of the word.

The three had come down into Colorado from the Black Hills, bringing their Chinese servant with them, and had struck the mining camp of Silver Bullet about an hour before Dan Glick had come into the tavern in such a boisterous fashion.

It was true that our hero had asked a miner if there were any silver mines for sale at a cheap price, for he had heard that there were in Silver Bullet, and it occurred to him that he might be able to make a good speculation.

Dan Glick had offered his mine for sale for a song, for it had given out in the production of ore that was worth digging for, and he went on a spree, declaring that he would sell to the first one who came along.

It seemed, from the reception he got from the person he was looking for, that there would be little prospect of a sale.

That is what he now thought as he leaned against the bar, and it was the opinion of everyone else in the room except Young Wild West and his partners.

Our hero was ready to make a deal with the man as soon as he was ready, for the thrashing he had administered to him did not make him feel the least bit different, as far as doing business with him was concerned.

He had formed the opinion the instant the miner came in that he was a rascal, but that made no difference.

If he could buy a silver mine of him cheap it was all the same.

It was about the middle of the afternoon of a day in

March that our three friends rode into Silver Bullet, and the moment they struck the camp they were satisfied that there was plenty of silver to be dug out there.

A big smelter was in operation and over a dozen shafts, with their derricks rising in the air, could be seen scattered around it.

But these mines belonged to the company that had built the smelting plant, so it was hardly likely that any of them could be bought.

But scattered around here and there at the outskirts of the shanty town were other mines that were being operated on a smaller scale.

These belonged to individuals, and one of them was the Straight Tip mine, which belonged to Dan Glick, and had made him several thousand dollars in the past three months.

And now he was willing to part with it for almost anything he could get, because he believed the supply of paydirt had become exhausted.

After he had leaned against the bar of the tavern for two or three minutes without saying a word, Glick slowly turned around and faced the man who was doing duty behind it.

"A little tanglefoot, Jack," he said, in a rather meek way. "I'm sorter ker-flummixed over what jest happened, yer know."

"I reckon so, Dan," was the reply. "That's ther first time I ever seen yer git your dose. I can't help sayin' that it served yer right, though."

"Well, maybe it did; I ain't sayin' nothin' about that," and with that he poured out a stiff horn from the black bottle that was tendered him.

When he had swallowed the liquor, Dan Glick threw his eyes upon Young Wild West, just as though he was meditating as to whether he had better look for revenge or try and sell his silver mine to him.

He decided upon the latter.

"Say!" he called out; "Young Wild West, do yer want ter buy my mine?"

"How much do you want for it?"

"Five thousand dollars will take it. There's everything there ter work with, too."

The miners in the room, who knew that the paydirt had run out, looked at each other.

"Dan has raised ther price," one of them whispered. "Ther blame old mine ain't worth anything, let alone five thousand."

"Well, I'd take it fur a gift," another remarked. "Yer can't tell what a little work might do there."

"We will go and look at your mine, and if it suits us I will buy it," said Young Wild West, calmly.

Glick felt like jumping through the roof, so delighted was he when he heard this.

"Come on an' have a look at ther mine, then!" he exclaimed. "It ain't more'n five minutes' walk from here."

"All right, Mr. Glick. Lead the way."

Though he had been humiliated before the men he knew

in the place, the miner now looked at them with an air of triumph, and, with a nod of his head, started for the door.

Evidently he thought he was getting revenge upon the boy for thrashing him by selling a piece of property that was no good.

Some of them thought that way, too, but it was not for them to say anything.

Young Wild West was a stranger to them, and Dan Glick was one whom they feared and respected, because he was such a hot-headed fellow and would shoot or use his knife at the least provocation.

Our three friends had put their horses up at the tavern stable, so they went along on foot with Glick.

As he said, it did not take them more than five minutes to reach the mine.

"There yer are!" exclaimed the miner, pointing to the shaft, with its crude machinery used for hoisting the ore out of the mine; "there's ther Straight Tip mine. I've made lots of money out of it, an' now I'm goin' ter give up silver minin' an' go ter some place where gold kin be dug out. I'm on a regular spree, or I wouldn't sell ther outfit so cheap. I needs ther money, ter tell ther truth."

"How does ther mine pan out?" asked Charlie.

Dan Glick shrugged his shoulders.

"I jest said that I made lots of money out of it," he said, evasively. "I don't know what you fellers could do with it. You'll have ter take ther chances. If yer can't git five thousand dollars out of her, providin' yer try a little hard, I reckon you won't be doin' much work."

The rascal did not mean this, for he was of the opinion that the mine was exhausted.

Young Wild West was altogether too shrewd to be fooled into buying the mine.

He knew that it was quite likely that Glick thought the mine was no longer any good.

But he had made just enough inquiries when he entered the mining camp to convince him that the majority of the mines were paying finely.

Our friends went down the shaft and made an inspection of the mine.

They were all well used to mines, and they soon found that only two galleries had been worked thoroughly.

Other parts had been dug into a few feet, but that was all.

Wild figured it up that the rude machinery, tools and shanty on the claim were worth a thousand dollars.

The other four thousand must be found in the mine itself if he bought it.

"Well," he said, when they went up the shaft and got out of the bucket, "I'll let you know at six o'clock whether I will take it or not, Mr. Glick."

The miner's face fell.

"How much do yer offer right now, without waitin', Young Wild West?" he asked, thinking that he was going to lose the sale unless he dropped his price.

"You are willing to take less than the price you asked, then?" our hero asked.

"I'm putty anxious ter sell. What will yer give fur it jest as everything stands?"

"I'll take the risk of giving you just three thousand dollars."

"Good enough! I'll take it!"

Glick would have taken two thousand, so he considered that he was just a thousand ahead of the game.

"All right. We'll close the deal right away; where is there a man to draw the papers?"

"Come on! I'll take yer ter one in a jiffy."

Half an hour later the Straight Tip mine had changed hands, and Young Wild West was now the owner.

CHAPTER II.

HOP WAH FRIGHTENS DAN GLICK.

When Dan Glick got his money for the mine he sold to Young Wild West he started in to have a genuine good time, as he called it.

He gave it out to his friends that he had received five thousand dollars for the property, in order to make it appear that he had fleeced our hero out of more money than he really thought he had.

The majority of those who had been present when the miner got his "dose" from the dashing young deadshot felt sorry for the boy, for they thought he had made a mistake in investing in the Straight Tip mine.

It was quite natural that Glick should choose the Silver Bullet Tavern as the place to spend some of his money.

He got what the miners termed "roaring drunk" in less than an hour, and had several others in about the same condition.

It was about this time that Young Wild West's Chinaman came in for a "lillie dlink of tanglefoot," as he put it, and the moment the big miner set eyes upon him he pulled his gun and began to shoot holes through the floor dangerously close to the Celestial's feet.

Hop Wah was the name of the Chinaman, and though he was not much of a fighter, he was a great deal more than the casual observer would take him to be.

He was a sleight-of-hand performer of no mean ability and a pronounced gambler as well.

Added to this, he could tell an untruth much easier than he could speak the truth, especially when he had been doing anything that he knew Young Wild West would be apt to object to.

As the "bad man" began firing at his feet, Hop Wah let out a shrill yell and began dancing the best he knew how.

"Melican man lettee Chinees 'lone; me allee light!" he shrieked.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Glick. "Dance, yer pigtailed heathen! Dance as yer never done afore! I'm out fur sport to-day, an' I jest as lieve shoot a Chinees as not."

Crack! he fired another shot and came so near the Chinaman's foot that some in the room thought he must have hit it.

Hop let out a yell that could be heard all through the house.

Another shot was fired by the drunken rascal, and then in came Young Wild West.

He had been in the dining-room of the tavern, and, hearing the voice of his servant, had come out to find out what the trouble was.

He took in the situation instantly.

"Hold on, Dan Glick!" he cried, in a ringing voice. "Just let that Chinaman alone!"

The big miner colored slightly and began reloading his six-shooter.

"I don't know as it is fur you ter interfere," he said, doggedly.

"Well, I know it is for me to interfere. That Chinaman happens to be working for me. You just let him alone, do you hear?"

Glick had imbibed just enough liquor by this time to make him feel ugly and give him false courage.

"A Chinees ain't got no right ter live, anyhow," he said.

"Oh, yes, he has. You just let him alone. You can have your fun without shooting his toes off, or coming pretty close to doing it, I think. I don't want any further trouble with you, but if you don't do as I say I'll have to make you!"

"I reckon you ain't mad 'cause you think I got ther best of yer in sellin' ther Straight Tip mine, are yer?" and the miner looked at Wild and then winked to those who had been drinking with him at the bar.

"Oh, no!" retorted our hero; "I won't get mad about that. If you got the best of me on the deal you are welcome to the money. But I want you to let our Chinaman alone."

Dan Glick thought he had better quit, so he did so.

"All right, Young Wild West," he said, as he put his revolver back in his belt; "I reckon you're one of ther kind what has ter be humored a little. But how about ther Straight Tip mine? Think you're all goin' ter git rich, I s'pose. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, you shouldn't laugh so soon, Glick. It may be that we will clean up a few thousand out of that mine, even if you do think it is exhausted. I have heard tell of big scoops being made in just such mines, you know."

"Heard of 'em is good!" and again the rascally miner broke into a laugh. "Seein' 'em is what yer want, though."

There were a few men in the tavern who had not seen the way Glick had been handled by Young Wild West that afternoon, and they wondered why it was that he allowed the boy to live after talking to him the way he had.

Hop Wah stood against the partition of the bar-room, his eyes blinking and just the vestige of a foolish grin on his face.

"Me likee showee Misler Badee Man nicee lillie tlick,"

he said, as he turned to Wild and changed his expression to one that was "child-like and bland."

"All right, Hop; go ahead and show him a trick. I think he needs something to amuse him, besides riddling the floor with bullets and trying to scare you to death. Show him a trick that will make his eyes open."

"What's that he's goin' ter do?" asked Glick, who, though afraid to do anything that would arouse the dashing young deadshot, was just a bit impertinent in his way.

"You just wait a little while and he will show you," Wild answered. "You took our Chinaman for a fool, but he will soon prove that he knows more than you could learn if you lived a thousand years. He is a magician, and he could snap his fingers and turn you into a bag of meal, if he took a notion to do it. If I had not come in just as I did the chances are that he might have done it, and then your spree would have been cut short, and, as the tavern-keeper most likely would have fed the meal to the hogs, that would have been the last of you."

"Humph!" snorted the miner. "You talk as though I was a little child, Young Wild West. You don't think I would believe anything like that, do yer?"

"Well, you just wait and see what he does; then you can express your opinion afterward as to what he might be able to do."

Hop Wah now stepped up to Glick, smiling like a basket of chips, so to speak.

He took from one of his many mysterious pockets a big silk handkerchief of a yellow color and shook it out carefully to show that there was nothing in it.

Then, looking the miner straight in the eye, he said: "You givee me um glasse you gottee in um hand."

Glick had just swallowed his last drink of tanglefoot and had the empty glass in his hand.

He handed it over, looking around at his friends as much as to say, "I'll do what ther Chinees says, but I know he ain't able ter do anything that's surprisin'."

The Celestial then began telling a story about his uncle, who was a great mandarin in China, and wrapping the glass in the handkerchief as he spoke.

When he had it nicely wrapped and twisted so there was no danger of the glass from tumbling out, he handed the handkerchief to Glick and told him to unfold it and see what was in the glass.

The rascally fellow did so.

He soon exposed the glass to view, and the moment he did so he uttered a yell and hurriedly placed it on the bar.

No wonder he was surprised, for coiled in the glass was a small snake, coiled and with the head sticking above it.

The head was wiggling, too, and the forked tongue seemed to be directed straight at the miner.

"Wow!" yelled Glick, as he got it out of his hand; "what's that, you heathen galoot?"

"Me no know how snakee gittee in glasse," said Hop, shaking his head innocently; "you mustee been dlinkee snakes. Velly stlange."

The inmates of the room clustered around as close as

they dared to get to the wiggling snake in the glass, for they, like the majority of human beings, abhorred a snake.

If they had stopped to think about it they would have noticed that the slimy-looking reptile was over a brownish color, and that it only moved when they caused the bar to shake.

"Lat what me callee velly funny dlink," said Hop, stepping up and lifting the glass over his head. "Misler Bartender, givee me some watee; snakee wantee swim in glasse."

"Give him what he asks for," spoke up Wild, who noticed that Jack Sedgwick, the proprietor, hesitated.

The glass was a tumbler holding nearly half a pint, and the miners easily guessed that the snake would measure a foot if it were stretched out on the bar.

But Hop did not mean to stretch it out on the bar.

He shook the glass and the head moved and the coils seemed to try to unwind.

As the water was handed to him he placed the glass on the bar again and then poured it full to the brim, leaving the head sticking out.

Then he quickly placed the handkerchief over it in the form of an inverted cornucopia and started in to tell some more about his uncle in China.

But the eyes of those in the room kept upon the handkerchief, for they wanted to see what would happen next.

Hop was in no particular hurry to show them, however, and it was fully five minutes before he took hold of the handkerchief.

"Me guessee snakee havee goodee lillie swim now," he observed, and then he quickly lifted it and exposed the glass to view.

A hoarse murmur of astonishment went up.

The snake had utterly disappeared and the glass now appeared to be filled with whisky!

"Lat um tanglefoot you dlink," said the Chinaman, blandly. "You dlink lat, and um havee nicee lillie snakee in um inside. Hully uppee and dlink, Misler Badee Man!"

"Not fur a million dollars I won't!" shouted Glick, stepping for the door, while the rest of those present drew back further from the bar.

Wild looked at Sedgwick and shook his head.

"If that is the kind of liquor you sell I am glad that I am a teetotaler," he remarked.

"Thunder!" was all the landlord said.

Hop picked up the glass and lifted it to his lips.

But he changed his mind.

"No! me no dlink; me 'flaid snakee comee back to life and eatee um stomach off," he said.

Then he walked to the door and threw the brownish fluid outside and returned the glass to the bar.

It was quite a mystifying trick, but as the snake was made of gelatine, there was really nothing strange that it should melt and color the water in the glass.

The most of the miners were superstitious, anyhow, and

they immediately began to look upon the Chinaman with the greatest of respect.

Wild and his partners could not help laughing at the way the crowd acted.

"Are you satisfied that he could snap his fingers at you and make you turn into a bag of meal, Dan Glick?" he asked, looking at the big miner, who was standing near the door, his face very pale.

Before he could make a reply Hop started toward him and raised his hand as though he was going to snap his fingers at him.

With a yell of terror, Glick swung the door open and ran out as though he was pursued by fiends.

That settled it!

"See here," said Sedgwick, when things had quieted down a little, "Young Wild West, kin yer tell me how ther Chinaman done that trick?"

"No," was the reply. "I couldn't tell you if I tried. I am not a sleight-of-hand performer myself, so don't know how such tricks are done. I only know that Hop is pretty good at the game, that's all."

"Well, I should jest reckon that he was!" exclaimed a miner standing near.

"Me likee havee lilee dlink tanglefoot, Misler Wild," spoke up Hop, meekly.

"Well, I don't object to you having a drink. But make it just one, for I am not going to have you getting tipsy on this trip like you do sometimes."

"Me behavee allee samee likee Sunday schoolee boy in 'Flisco," was the Chinaman's reply, as he stepped up and gave his order to Sedgwick.

"You want ter look out that yer don't swaller a snake," said the landlord, with a grin.

"Me no 'flaid of lat," was the retort.

Our friends had decided to take possession of the claim Wild had bought that very night, so a little later they paid their bill at the tavern and took possession of the shanty that had been lately occupied by Dan Glick.

Young Wild West was confident that they would make a silver strike in the mine, though just why he thought that way he could not tell.

"We are going to trust to luck, boys," he said. "Tomorrow we will strike in to find out what the mine is worth, and as soon as we make a strike we will put the Straight Tip mine up for sale. That is the way to make money quick. We haven't the time to superintend the working of a mine, you know. There would be too much sameness about that."

CHAPTER III.

A SILVER VEIN IS STRUCK.

Young Wild West passed a pretty quiet night, for no one came to disturb them.

Nearly all night long, however, there were shouts to be heard from the vicinity of the tavern and other drinking-places of the camp, and occasionally pistol-shots could be heard.

But these sounds did not disturb our friends, though they took turns at keeping watch.

This was a precaution they always put into practice, as they had found by experience that a person could never tell when he was safe among such people as made up a mining camp.

As soon as it was daylight they were up and getting ready to make a test of the silver mine.

Hop Wah hummed a little tune of his own while he got the breakfast ready, and Wild and his partners took a look around and examined things in general near the mouth of the shaft.

Our friends always carried provisions with them when they made trips through the wilds of the West, and as they had enough on hand to get up a good breakfast, they did not bother with the supply yet.

They had just finished their breakfast when they saw a quaint-looking covered wagon approaching along the trail that wound itself up at the little street that ran through the camp.

The Straight Tip mine was located at the very edge of the camp, and near what was called the Denver Trail, for that was the way a start must be made to reach that city.

It was up this trail that the wagon was coming, and there was something so strange and peculiar about it that our friends could not help being interested in it.

The wagon was painted in all the colors of the rainbow, it seemed to them, and as it approached the morning sun shone upon it and made it glisten and sparkle.

"What in thunder kin that outfit be?" Cheyenne Charlie observed.

"I haven't the least idea," Wild answered. "But I suppose we will soon find out, for it is coming right past our claim."

"That's right," nodded Jim Dart. "Charlie, just have a little patience and you'll find out all about the rig."

"Oh, it wouldn't make an awful lot of difference if I never found out," answered the scout. "But I do think it is mighty funny that a covered wagon painted up so it glistens like that ain't exactly in place in a minin' camp. What difference does it make whether ther outfit was painted or not?"

The others remained silent, for the wagon, which was being drawn by a team of good-looking horses, was rapidly nearing them.

Hop Wah ceased his work of washing up the dishes used in getting breakfast and became an interested spectator.

Two minutes later the team came up opposite the claim, and then they all could see what sort of a looking wagon it was.

"Great gimlets!" exclaimed Cheyenne Charlie; "a patent medicine peddler!"

That was just the size of it.

The brightly-painted and varnished wagon contained a picture of a railroad train on one side and a steamboat on the other, while over each of them were the words:

TAKE DR. DUCK'S HEALTH PRESERVER
and live to be a hundred years old. Only
\$5.00 a bottle.

"Whoa!" called out the driver of the fancy-looking vehicle, noticing that Young Wild West and his friends were apparently much interested. "Good-morning, gentlemen! This town is called Silver Bullet, is it not?"

"Yes, this is Silver Bullet," answered our hero. "Quite an outfit you've got there."

"That's right, young man," spoke up the man who was sitting at the driver's side. "No one but the owner and manufacturer of the best medicine in the world could afford a fine outfit like this. I want to sell each of you a bottle of Dr. Duck's Health Preserver. A guarantee goes with every bottle."

"We don't want any just now, Doctor."

"You had better buy now, for when it gets known what a wonderful invigorator my medicine is it won't last long. You had better take half a dozen bottles to be on the safe side. Six for twenty-five dollars."

"No, thanks. We positively don't want any medicine. We have a silver mine here, and that will give us all the medicine we need for awhile. Plenty of exercise is medicine, you know."

"Work hard and die young!" said the driver, as he touched the horses with the whip and drove off.

"I reckon that's what I call putty good," observed the scout, with a grin. "Jest wait till they git around ther tavern an' when ther gang is there! I reckon they'll sell lots of that medicine, fur a miner ginerally thinks he ought ter have a sort of tonic now an' then, it seems. Spring medicine used ter be a big seller in Leadville, I know."

Wild soon dropped Dr. Duck and his wonderful Health Preserver from his mind and got to work.

He did not think it worth while to hire any men to dig in the galleries below, since there was really nothing to be done but to search for a vein that would pay.

It is doubtful if he could have hired anyone, anyhow, for the men who wanted to work all had good-paying jobs. They now got ready to go down in the mine.

"Hop, you can stay here in the shanty and get things to rights," said Wild, addressing the Chinaman. "There is no telling how long we will stay here, for I don't intend to leave until I have made something on my investment. Dan Glick and his friends think we are badly stuck, but I am going to show them that we are not."

"Lat light, Mislér Wild; anybody findee plenty silver in um mine it be allee same you," answered Hop, nodding just as though he felt certain that he was saying what was right.

Our three friends descended into the mine a few minutes later.

The shaft was not a deep one, for Dan Glick had not worked the claim as much as he might have done.

Charlie took a lighted lantern down with them and they promptly began to explore the interior.

Though there were plenty of evidences of silver deposits to be seen in the rock and dirt at the sides of the two galleries, a pick or two at the spots brought out nothing that would pay.

For an hour they went about trying it here and there, and then pausing for a moment and looking at his partners, Young Wild West said:

"Boys, my idea is to start and dig out another gallery and keep right on digging until we strike something."

"Good enough!" exclaimed the scout and Dart at the same time.

"And we may as well start right here and swing off to the right, so as to intersect with the other tunnel."

He pointed out the spot and then his partners started in with their picks.

None of the three were afraid of a little hard work, and as they all felt that they must keep up the reputation Young Wild West had for doing things, they went at it with a will.

Thud—thud! Thud—thud!

The picks sounded in regular time now, and with a shovel Wild threw back the dirt.

They kept at it hard till noon, and then, just as they were about to quit to go up, and get something to eat, there was a sudden cave-in, and then they saw that their labors had not been in vain.

The practiced eyes of the three told them plainly that they had struck a vein of rich silver ore!

"I thought so," commented Young Wild West, as he wiped the perspiration from his brow; "I felt sure that I had made no mistake in buying the mine. I'll bet all I am worth that the vein there runs far enough to pan out more than enough money to equal the price I paid Dan Glick!"

"As sure as yer live it does!" cried the scout, taking off his hat and nodding with delight.

"Wow! Wow-wow! Whoopee!" he yelled.

His voice echoed through the mine and was heard by Hop, who had just come to the mouth of the shaft to call them to dinner.

Wild did not get the least bit excited.

He knew they had made a good strike, and he simply took it cool, as he did everything else.

"It seems surprising that Glick failed to dig in this particular spot," he observed, as he broke off a piece of the ore with Jim's pick. "It must have been that this mine was left for us to develop. Come on, boys! we'll go up and have something to eat."

Taking the piece of ore with him, he ascended in the bucket, Charlie and Jim hoisting it by means of a double

block and fall which was the rigging attached to it, instead of a winch at the top.

As soon as he stepped out the bucket went down, and then it was an easy matter for his partners to get up.

"Whattée mattee, Misler Charlie?" asked the Chinaman, as the scout stepped from the bucket.

"Nothin' much," was the retort.

"Me hear you holler allee samee likee sixty."

"Well, we struck a vein, an' I felt like hollerin', you measly coyote! Ain't I got a right ter holler if I want ter?"

"Hoolay!" yelled Hop; "me holler, too! Hoolay! Hip hi!"

The three soon washed up and then sat down to the meal Hop had prepared for them.

From the haunch of a deer they had brought to the camp with them he had made a savory venison stew, and this with corncakes, butter and good coffee, was all that they could ask for just then.

Not until they had finished eating did Wild make an examination of the piece of ore he had brought up with him.

Then he broke it into pieces and carefully examined it.

"About six hundred dollars to the ton, boys," he said, calmly. "That is what I call a silver scoop for fair. There ought to be a few hundred tons of this in that mine, I think."

"I reckon that'll go higher than six," observed the scout, as he made an examination of some of the pieces. "I'd be willin' ter bet it would!"

"Well, I think so myself. Some parts of it seems to be the pure stuff. But we'll find out pretty soon. We'll go over to the smelter and have this tested."

They did go over about half an hour later, and when the expert looked at it he opened wide his eyes.

"Where did this come from?" he asked.

"From the Straight Tip mine," answered our hero.

"What!"

The man looked incredulous.

"That is right," our hero assured him, with a smile.

"Dan Glick couldn't get anything more out of the mine and so sold it to me. I made a strike this morning. That's all there is to it."

"Why, that is the richest ore that has ever been found in this region!" declared the expert. "If there is much in the lead you have struck I guess you have beat out anyone in Silver Bullet."

"Well, I feel confident that there are a thousand tons of the ore there waiting to be dug out. It may not all run as rich as this, though; but, for all that, this is a piece I broke off at random."

"Let me know how you make out in a couple of days from now, and if I think it worth while I will come around and make you an offer for the mine. The syndicate will buy up all mining property where there is a chance to make money."

"All right. I will be ready to sell if I get my price."

"What do you ask for the Straight Tip now?"

"A hundred thousand dollars," answered our hero, saying the amount that first came in his head.

The mining expert laughed.

"I guess you are joking. Why, I heard that Glick sold you the mine yesterday for five thousand dollars."

"I didn't pay as much as that. He was glad to let it go for three thousand, and he thinks he stuck me at that. But I rather think he will feel like kicking himself when he finds I have sold the mine for a hundred thousand in a couple of days from now."

The man smiled at this, but made no comment.

From the smelter Wild and his partners walked over to the tavern.

There was something going on there, as they could tell by the screams of laughter that came from within.

Our hero opened the door and found the room pretty full of miners, who had refrained from going to work on account of the extreme liberality of Dan Glick.

Glick was there with them.

He stood in the center of the room holding a bottle which bore a fancy label in his hand, and near him was Dr. Duck.

"So ther price of this stuff is five dollars a bottle, hey?" he was saying as our friends entered. "Well, I reckon I'll take this bottle fur a sample, as I was jest sayin'. If I like ther medicine I'll recommend it ter my friends, an' if I do that you'll sell all you've got in less than half a day, 'cause my word goes a whole big distance in Silver Bullet. I'm ther boss miner of this camp, an' when I speak everybody listens."

"All right," the patent medicine man answered, who evidently thought it better to lose a bottle than to get into trouble. "You give the medicine a trial, and if I don't make you live a hundred years I will cheerfully furnish you with another bottle free of all charge!"

Just then Dan Glick turned and saw our friends.

"Here comes Young Wild West!" he exclaimed. "He'll buy a bottle."

CHAPTER IV.

DAN GLICK'S RESOLVE.

"I guess I don't want to buy any medicine, Glick," said our hero, calmly. "It may be all right for you to take some of it, though, for you will be pretty sick in a day or two, I have an idea."

"What's that you say, Young Wild West?" and the miner looked at him sharply, for he could tell by the ring of the boy's voice that he was in earnest.

"Never mind," was the reply. "I don't intend to repeat what I said. You heard well enough."

"Yer don't think I'm drinkin' so hard that I'll git sick, do yer?"

"Well, that may make you sick."

"You either meant that, or else I'd be sick 'cause I sold ther Straight Tip mine ter you."

"Well, it might be that way. You can't always tell."

"I reckon it'll never be that way. Ha, ha, ha! Why, I got every ounce of silver that was in ther blamed old mine. You've got ther mine, so it'll be you what gits sick, I reckon."

Again he laughed boisterously.

He quickly dropped the subject, and, walking over to the corner of the room to his left, put the bottle of medicine on the floor.

"Now, boys," he said, pulling a revolver from his belt and waving it over his head, "I'm goin' ter see how good this medicine is. It is called Health Preserver, so look out!"

Crack!

He fired and broke the bottle at the first shot.

The contents ran over the floor in a reddish brown stream.

"Yer floor is putty sick-lookin', Sedgwick, so we'll jest let it have a dose of ther wonderful preserver, as ther doctor says it is!" roared Glick, and then a yell of laughter went up from his friends, who really thought it one of the best jokes they had ever heard.

The doctor shook his head sadly and turned to the man who had been driving the team when our friends saw them.

"It is too bad to waste that," he said. "I gave the bottle as a sample, but I did not think it would be wasted like that."

"It's all right, Doctor," spoke up Glick. "I say ther medicine is all right. Now I'm goin' ter buy a bottle of it. Here's your five dollars, so jest get out a bottle as quick as yer kin. We'll all take a dose right here."

The fancy-covered wagon was standing at the side of the shanty tavern, and, without waiting an instant, the driver hastened out and unlocked the door in the back.

In a minute he came in with half a dozen bottles of the preparation.

Glick paid his money and took a bottle.

He borrowed a corkscrew of the landlord and drew the cork.

"How much fur a dose?" he asked.

"Two tablespoons whenever you're feeling badly," answered the doctor.

"Well, here goes, then!" and the bottle was placed to his lips.

He took a good swallow and then gave a nod of satisfaction.

"That's putty good stuff, I reckon," he observed, smacking his lips.

The truth was that the principal ingredient in the so-called medicine was whisky.

Dan Glick liked the taste it left in his mouth.

Then he asked for a glass and gave each of his friends a taste in turn.

They all declared that it was very good.

It so happened that two of them had some money, and they each bought a bottle.

These two men were the particular friends and cronies of Glick, and they liked to follow his example in anything he did.

They owned a claim jointly and were making plenty of money, though they did little work themselves.

Just now they were letting the men who worked for them do as they pleased, for they were enjoying a good spree with their friend.

Neither of them were what could be called honest men.

But as Glick was not himself, that made all the more friendship exist between them.

Their names were Abe Cortright and Tom Carpenter.

The rest of those drinking at the expense of Glick were nothing more than men who never did much work and hung around waiting for what they could get from the "flush" miners who came in.

The doctor found that he was not likely to do any more business just then and had his man take the bottles out to the wagon again.

Glick treated all hands to a dose apiece from his bottle, and then the proprietor began to think that the patent medicine man was hurting his business.

"Lemme have a taste of that stuff," he said.

"All right," answered Glick, and he passed him the bottle.

"Why, that ain't nothin' more'n cheap whisky, flavored with cinnamon an' sweetened with syrup," he said, with a look of disgust.

"Oh, no, my friend," spoke up Dr. Duck; "I will admit that there is a certain percentage of alcohol in it, but that is to preserve it. The change of climate might cause the medicine to spoil if that precaution was not taken."

Sedgwick looked at Wild and his partners and winked.

"Ther most of folks like ter be fooled," he said, laconically.

At this the doctor took offense, and then he began to extol the virtues of his medicine so forcibly that at last the tavern-keeper admitted that there might be some good in it.

It was just about this time that the mining expert from the smelter came in.

"Hello, Glick!" said he, nodding to the miner. "I guess you will be sorry you sold the Straight Tip in a day or two."

"What's that?" Glick asked, looking first at the man and then at Young Wild West.

"I mean what I say. I examined some ore that was taken out of the Straight Tip mine a little while ago, and I am glad to say that it goes far ahead of any that has yet been dug up in Silver Bullet. There is the young fellow who brought the ore over. I believe he said his name is Young Wild West."

"Thunder!" gasped Glick. "Is that right, Young Wild West?"

"Just as true as you're standing there," replied our hero. "I mean to sell the Straight Tip mine for a hundred thousand dollars in less than a week. I guess you didn't stick me much, after all."

"Sizzlin' catamounts!" roared the miner. "I reckon I'll call ther deal off an' give you back your money."

"And I reckon you won't!" retorted our hero. "You couldn't buy the mine back if you laid down ninety thousand dollars. You never worked the property enough to find out what it was really worth."

Glick was a much crest-fallen man.

But in a few minutes he burst into a laugh.

"Pshaw!" he exclaimed; "I reckon you ain't made no rich strike. You might have found a little bit what I left in ther mine, an' you're tryin' ter make it appear that yer didn't git stuck. I'm satisfied, if you are."

"Well, I am perfectly satisfied, I can tell you," was Wild's retort.

Now that the rascally fellow had heard the news of their strike, our hero and his partners left the tavern and went back to the mine.

When they had gone Glick questioned the expert and learned that what he had said in regard to the sample of ore brought to him for examination was true.

The miner turned all colors.

"If you are sick take another dose of ther Health Pre-server," suggested Sedgwick.

Then Glick got as mad as a hornet.

He let out a string of oaths and wound up by emptying the contents of his revolver into the floor.

"I wish it was Young Wild West what had got them bullets instead of them planks," he observed, as he re-loaded the weapon.

Cortright and Carpenter nodded approvingly, but the rest shrugged their shoulders, as much as to say it was pretty plain talk he was using.

Glick fell into a meditative mood after that.

He leaned against the bar with his eyes fixed on the floor for the space of several seconds.

Then suddenly he looked at his two chums and observed:

"I reckon I'll go over ter ther shanty an' take a little sleep. Are you fellers goin' along?"

"Yes," was the reply.

The miner who had sold his mine to Young Wild West was stopping at the shanty of his two friends.

Cortright and Carpenter could tell by the glance he shot at them that he did not mean to go to sleep.

They took it that he wanted to tell them something.

The three walked out of the place and made their way to the shanty on the claim of the pair, which was only about a hundred yards from the Straight Tip mine.

Once inside the roughly-constructed building, Glick threw himself upon the most comfortable seat to be seen and stretched his lanky form out to its full length.

"Boys," said he, "I reckon I was a fool ter sell ther Straight Tip."

"If there's anything true in what we jest heard yer was, Dan," Carpenter answered, as he moved up a stool.

"Maybe it ain't true, though," spoke up Cortright. "Young Wild West might be doin' this jest ter make yer think he ain't stuck."

"That's what I was thinkin', Abe," nodded the villainous miner. "But it seems funny that he would give it out that he's goin' ter sell ther mine fur a hundred thousand dollars, though."

"He's bluffin', most likely," Cortright insisted.

Glick shook his head.

"Young Wild West ain't ther galoot ter do much bluffin'."

Dan shrugged his shoulders as he said it, showing that he had not forgotten his first meeting with the dashing young deadshot.

"I reckon we kin easy find out if he has struck a rich lead," said Cortright, after a pause.

"How?"

"Why, jest pay a visit to ther mine. Them galoots wouldn't object, 'tain't likely."

"If I pay a visit to ther mine an' find out that there's any truth in what Young Wild West says, you kin bet that he won't live ten seconds after I set eyes on him!"

"Yer mean ter finish him, then, Dan?" asked Carpenter.

"Yes, an' his pards, too. If there's anything more worth diggin' out in ther mine it belongs ter me. I wouldn't have sold it if I thought it was worth keepin'."

"You kin gamble on it that I'll stick ter you in anything you do, Dan!" Cortright declared.

"An' I wouldn't go back on yer, nohow," added Carpenter.

"S'pose we take a walk over there an' try an' find out jest how things is?"

"Good!" exclaimed both his friends.

"But there's three of 'em, an' they're putty dangerous customers, I reckon. I guess we'd better find a couple more men ter help out in this business. Tom, you go an' git a couple of ther boys what kin be depended on."

"All right," answered Carpenter, and he promptly arose and left the shanty.

He was not gone more than ten minutes when he came back, accompanied by two of the toughest-looking fellows to be found in the mining camp.

Glick knew them and he nodded approvingly when they came in.

"Did yer hear anything about Young Wild West strikin' it rich at ther Straight Tip, boys?" he asked.

"Yes," replied one of them. "It's a straight story, too. I jest heard it from one of ther foremen over at ther smelter. It's ther finest ore that's ever been taken out of Colorader soil, they say. Too bad yer sold out, Dan. If I was you I'd jest go back on ther sale an' make them galoots vamoose ther ranch."

"That's jest what I'm thinkin' of doin'. But I want ter find out fur a fact first. If you two fellers goes with

us an' helps us out in case there's a fight, there'll be some-
thin' worth while comin' ter yer from me. How about
it?"

"I guess you oughter know that we'd stick by a feller
like you," retorted the man who had just spoken.

"Sartin!" chimed in the other. "You're always ready
ter ask a galoot ter have a drink whether he's got ther
money ter return it or not. You kin count on me every
time. What do I care about this Young Wild West? Of
course I don't want ter git in no argument with him,
'cause they say he kin shoot quicker'n lightnin', an' that
he never misses when he pulls a trigger."

"Well, it's understood that if they've struck it rich at
ther mine they've got ter go under, then, is that it?"
asked Glick, as he arose to his feet.

"Yes!" came from the four unanimously.

"Come on, then, boys! You'll never lose nothin' by
stickin' ter Dan Glick, an' yer kin bet all you're worth on
that!"

The five villains headed for the mine that had been
bought by Young Wild West the day before, and every
man of them was ready to do murder.

CHAPTER V.

THE FIGHT IN THE MINE.

Wild, Charlie and Jim promptly went down into the
mine when they came over from the tavern.

They were all anxious to try and learn just what the
breadth of the vein was.

All three began digging earnestly and with a deter-
mination to find out all that was necessary to satisfy them
that it was not a blind lead they had struck.

They dug around the spot that contained the ore, and
finally measured it and found it to be about fifteen feet
wide and fully as high.

That meant that the vein need not extend a great dis-
tance to pan out a fortune, providing it was all like the
sample they had taken to the expert.

In half an hour they had satisfied themselves that there
was no mistake about it.

Some lumps were chipped out with the picks, and then
with the lantern on the ground to give them light they
proceeded to examine them.

"There's a good chunk, and I'll bet it is half pure sil-
ver!" observed our hero, as he weighed a lump in his
hand. "I'll just break it up and find out what it looks
like."

As Wild was in the act of cracking the lump of ore the
sound of footsteps came to their ears.

The next instant Dan Glick and two of his men ap-
peared ready for fight.

"Here's where you die!" he exclaimed.

"I reckon not, you slab-sided galoot!" answered Char-

lie, who had whipped out his revolver the instant he heard
them coming. "Hold up your hands, yer measly coyotes!"

Crack!

One of the men fired a shot and the bullet clipped a
lock of hair from the scout's head.

Crack!

Charlie did not hesitate to answer the shot, and, with
a gasping cry, the man who had come so near hitting him
dropped to rise no more in life.

Crack!

Dan Glick fired this time, and out went the lantern.

The villain had nerved himself for something desperate,
it seemed, and he had been marksman enough to smash
the lantern with a bullet.

By this time our friends had leaped behind an angle of
the gallery and were ready to fight the villains to a finish.

"Come on, you scoundrels!" exclaimed Young Wild
West. "A fight in the dark is as fair for one as it is for
the other."

One of the intruders fired, and as he saw the flash Wild
fired also.

A howl of pain told him that the bullet had found its
mark.

But more footsteps were heard now, and then our
friends realized that more than three of the scoundrels
were down in the mine.

The situation was not a very pleasant one.

In order to explain the presence of the villainous gang
we will go back to the time that Glick and his four men
started for the mine.

When they got there they found Hop Wah standing in
the door of the shanty.

The Chinaman was surprised when he saw the men
approaching, for he recognized Glick right away.

He knew that the man was no friend of Wild's, and
that made him feel that something was wrong.

He started to go inside to get his big six-shooter, which
he had left lying on a stool while he did his work.

"Hold on there!" said Glick, quickly covering him with
his revolver.

Hop did not want to get a bullet in him, so he stood
still.

The rascally miner walked up to him and then placed
the muzzle of his weapon against his head.

"Melican man no shootee! Me good Chinees!" cried
the frightened Celestial.

"Ha!" said Glick, with a chuckle. "I reckon yer fur-
got ter snap your fingers at me an' turn me inter a bag
of meal, didn't yer? I knowed yer was nothin' more than
a yaller galoot what had learned ter be smarter than ther
general run of your race in some things. I was told that
ther snake yer got in ther glass wasn't alive, an' that it
was only made of some kind of candy paste that would
melt when water touched it. There wasn't nothin' so
funny about your trick, after all; it was your way of doin'
it what s'prised us all. But yer can't do nothin' that's
wonderful, not when you've got ther muzzle of a big forty-

five pressin' ag'in your yaller forehead. Boys, jest tie him up and put somethin' in his mouth so he can't do any squealin' an' let anyone know that there's somethin' wrong."

The two men who had been sent for to join the gang at once proceeded to obey the command.

"Come on down ther shaft as soon as yer git him dead ter rights," added Glick, as he started for the opening of the mine, followed by Abe Cortright and Tom Carpenter.

"All right," was the reply; "go ahead! We'll be down putty soon."

Glick reached the rope that manipulated the bucket and quickly hauled it up.

Then he and Cortright got in and went down in a hurry.

They sent the bucket up and brought Carpenter down.

The other two men appeared at the mouth of the shaft just then, they having fixed Hop Wah so he could not get out of the shanty or utter a cry for help.

Carpenter motioned for them to come on down, and then he followed Glick and Cortright, who had already started through a gallery, from which they could hear voices.

Glick had a miner's lamp on his hat, so he quickly lighted it, as it was very dark in the gallery.

The three moved softly along and presently got to a bend from which they could hear what Young Wild West and his partners were talking about.

They listened for a couple of minutes and then became convinced that there was no doubt but that they had struck it rich.

"Them galoots has got ter die!" exclaimed Glick, and then the three made toward our friends, as has been recorded.

It was Cortright who fell from Cheyenne Charlie's bullet after he had fired at the scout, instead of obeying the command to hold up his hands.

Glick's lamp went out when the first shot was fired, and then it occurred to him that it would be better if they all were in darkness, so he sent a well-directed shot at the lantern, and the result was accomplished.

"Cortright's shot," said Glick, in a low tone of voice, as the other two villains came running through the gallery. "We must never let Young Wild West an' his pards git out of here alive!"

"You bet we won't!" replied one of them. "They'll have ter die fur killin' Cortright."

Then the leader of the gang struck a match and lighted the lamp on his hat.

It was the worst thing he could do if he really expected to put an end to our three friends.

Wild and his partners saw the gleam from the lamp the moment it was lighted and they got ready for business.

"They mean us, I guess, boys," said Wild. "But they are making a mighty big mistake if they think they are

going to get us. Just take it easy now. It is a case of shooting to kill, and we don't want to waste a shot, unless it is done for a purpose. I don't like to shoot a man, no matter how persistent he is in trying to take my life, but it has got to be done sometimes. Self-preservation is the first law of nature!"

Cheyenne Charlie chuckled grimly.

"We mustn't consider them galoots as bein' human bein's," he answered. "They're nothin' more'n a lot of hungry wolves tryin' ter kill us an' eat us up. If they don't quit their game we've got ter drop 'em, that's all."

The three could see the glimmer of light as it flashed around the bend, and, with their revolvers in their hands, they waited.

Presently they saw the light approaching.

The villains were coming!

Wild and his two companions crouched behind the pile of dirt that had been made while they were digging to find the silver vein.

They all knew that they had a pretty good chance, no matter if there were a dozen of the miners.

It would have taken a big party of determined men to get to them.

Suddenly the voice of Dan Glick called out:

"You fellers has got one chance ter live. Do yer want ter know what it is?"

"No!" retorted Wild. "Don't waste your breath to tell us. We'll take the chances of living, all right."

"Well, I'll tell yer, anyhow. If you're willin' ter give ther mine back ter me an' then strike out fur some other place as soon as we let yer out, yer kin live. You've got ter put down your shooters an' surrender first, though."

Young Wild West laughed scornfully.

"You had better get out of the mine and light out yourselves," he answered. "I give it to you straight when I say that you all will either swing before to-morrow morning or die with bullets in you! Don't think for a moment that we are afraid of you. If there were twenty of you it would be the same. Now, then, which of you wants to die first? Step up and get your medicine. It won't be as good as the Health Preserver you were drinking over in the tavern, either; it will be just the contrary, in fact."

Crack!

One of the villains fired, but as he did not come around the bend far enough to shoot toward them, the bullet went seven or eight feet out of the way.

"Wow!" yelled Charlie, making out that he had been hit.

An exclamation of delight came from the gallery where the men were.

"I reckon that fooled ther measly coyotes," said the scout, in a whisper. "They'll try it ag'in now."

The words were scarcely out of his mouth when another shot rang out.

Again Charlie uttered a cry that sounded like one caused by pain, ending it with a gasp and striking the ground with his foot as though he had fallen.

Crack!

A third shot rang out.

Charlie tried the ruse again, but it was hardly likely that it worked this time, for there was a deep silence of a couple of minutes and no more shots were fired.

"Come on and get me!" Wild called out. "I am alive and able to fight yet."

"I reckon yer are, Young Wild West," retorted Glick from around the bend. "We'll be there putty soon now. You've got that chance I told yer about yet, though."

"I don't want any chance. Just show yourself and we will soon settle this business."

But the villains were not going to show themselves.

They were suspicious that they had been fooled.

Glick did not offer to lead the way, so the others did not mean to go it without him.

Wild picked up a lump of the silver ore which weighed about a quarter of a pound.

He could see the gallery back where the light from the miner's lamp showed, so, taking aim, he threw it so it would strike the side and then bound toward them.

Thud!

The lump hit the rock that was there and bounded where he thought it would.

It struck one of the men, too, for a sharp cry that was not put on, like Charlie's had been, was the result.

"There's a sample of the silver we found here, Glick," the boy called out in a tantalizing way. "You had better take a good look at it, for you are not long for this world!"

There was no reply, but the throwing of the chunk of ore at them must have put an idea in the head of Glick, for a couple of minutes later something struck the uneven wall a dozen feet to the left of our friends and then fell to the ground.

Bang!

An explosion rang out almost immediately.

The villains had thrown a powder-horn there, after first putting a fuse in it and lighting it.

But it did no damage to our friends other than to choke them with the smoke.

Charlie began to utter a series of groans as though in the greatest of agony.

Then footsteps were heard coming.

The light slowly approached, too, and Wild and his partners held themselves in readiness to act.

The very instant the form of a man came in sight Charlie fired.

The villain fell back with a cry of mortal agony.

Then the villainous gang could be heard beating a retreat through the gallery.

"I guess we have won out, boys," said Young Wild West, calmly.

CHAPTER VI.

WILD TELLS THE VILLAINS WHAT THEY MUST DO.

Wild was pretty certain that the villains were getting out of the mine as fast as they could, but he did not want to run into the least danger of being ambushed by them.

The sounds of their receding footsteps told his practiced ears plainly that three or four men were hurrying through the gallery, and as he did not believe that there were any more than that number left, he concluded that they had all gone.

At any rate, it was safe to move toward the shaft in the dark, so he passed the word to Charlie and Jim, and then they started softly from the spot.

Quickly but noiselessly they made their way along, rapidly nearing the foot of the mine shaft.

The light from the lamp Dan Glick had carried on his hat could no longer be seen, so it was easy for them to go ahead.

In a very few seconds they were able to see where the daylight came down the shaft.

Then they heard the creaking of a block.

"The scoundrels are going up!" exclaimed Wild, in a low voice. "Come on, boys!"

Out he stepped into the light just in time to see the bucket going up with three men in it.

A fourth, being unable to get in, was hanging fast to the rope, while the three in it were hauling it up.

Wild knew that they would be apt to cut the rope and send the bucket crashing down when they once got out of the shaft, so he thought he had better do something.

Acting on an impulse, he darted forward and seized the edge of the bucket just as it got about six feet from the ground.

Holding fast with his left hand, he made a grab with his right and caught one of the men by the belt.

One quick jerk and he was pulled out of the bucket.

Thud!

Hé landed at the bottom of the shaft on his head and shoulders, while the daring boy dropped safely on his feet.

The bucket went up faster than ever after this took place, showing that the three villains were not going to take the chances of saving their companion.

There had been five of them to come down, but only three were going up!

Charlie and Jim pounced upon the miner with amazing quickness.

As soon as he saw that they had him, Wild called to the villains above him:

"If you want to see your friend alive again you will lower the bucket down and see to it that the Chinaman comes to the mouth of the shaft."

There was no reply.

But a minute later the villains had landed, and then down came the bucket.

Our friends took good care to keep clear of the bottom of the opening, as they did not know what the villains might take a notion to do.

However, Wild felt pretty sure that they would do just as he had told them to.

"Who is the rascal I caught, boys? Do you know him?" he asked.

"It's one of ther galoots what bought a bottle of medicine from that doctor feller," Charlie answered.

It was Tom Carpenter.

Wild could not have caught a better one, for Glick thought a great deal of Carpenter.

And so he had of Cortright, but Cortright had met a deserved fate and his stiffening form lay back in the gallery.

The other man had only been slightly wounded.

Five minutes from the time the bucket came down the voice of Hop was heard coming down the shaft.

"Hello, Mister Wild!" he called out.

"Hello, Hop!" our hero replied. "Are you there?"

"Yes, badee Melican man tellee me pullee you allee same uppee."

"Where are the three villains, Hop?"

"Lun away allee samee likee velly muchee 'flaid."

"All right. We will come up, then."

Wild assisted to get the villainous miner, who was unconscious, into the bucket, and then he stepped in and told Jim to follow suit.

"You stay here and we will send down for you, Charlie," he said.

"All right," answered the scout.

They soon got to the surface of the ground, and as he stepped from the bucket our hero looked around and caught sight of the villains just as they went into the tavern.

"Ah!" he exclaimed; "Jim, I guess they don't mean to quit the camp. Well, that means that we have got a fight on our hands. The chances are that Glick has got lots of friends here who are of the class that he belongs to, and he probably depends upon them to stick by him. It makes no difference how many he has got behind him, he has got to quit Silver Bullet before we do! I'll see that he does it, as sure as my name is Young Wild West!"

"That's right, Wild," answered Dart.

Hop was busy lowering the bucket for Charlie, and in a couple of minutes the scout was brought to the surface.

"Where are ther measly coyotes?" he asked, holding his revolver ready to shoot at an instant's notice.

Wild told him where they had gone, and then Charlie nodded significantly. Just then Carpenter came to and his hands were tied behind him.

"Somethin' will happen afore long, I reckon," he remarked.

"Me velly muchee surprised when badee mans lette me

loose," observed Hop, who had been waiting for a chance to tell what had happened to him.

"How did they get down without you knowing anything about it, anyhow?" Wild asked.

"Ley catchee poor Chinaman putty quicke; len tie uppee and go down."

Hop then told all that had happened in his own peculiar way and our friends made up their minds that the villains must have been pretty determined.

"Well," observed our hero, "I guess we had better settle this business as soon as possible. Come on! We'll go over to the tavern and see what the galoots are going to do about it."

"Me go, too, Misler Wild?" queried Hop.

"No," was the retort; "you will stay here and see to it that no one goes down into the mine again until we come back."

"An' have your shooter ready, so yer don't git catched like yer did afore," added the scout.

"Me no gittee catchee some more."

"I hardly think you will," said Jim, "for it is not likely that the same fellows will come back again."

Young Wild West and his two partners started for the tavern prepared for a lively time of it.

On the way they were stopped by a couple of miners who were working on their claim.

"What's ther matter with Dan Glick?" one of them asked. "Is he sorry that he sold his mine ter yer, Young Wild West?"

"I guess he is," answered Wild; "and he'll be sorry that he ever saw a mine before I get through with him. He brought his gang down the shaft to clean us up while we were at work, after first binding and gagging our Chinaman in the shanty."

"Is that so? Ther rascal! I never did have any use fur Glick, though I never thought it would be wise ter tell him so. He tried ter finish yer, then?"

"Yes, and one of his gang got his medicine before he gave it up as a bad job."

"Here's a galoot what kin tell yer all about it if he wants ter," spoke up Charlie, swinging Carpenter around so he faced the two men.

The villain had only been stunned, and, beyond a bump on the back of his head, was all right now.

"I ain't got nothin' ter say," he promptly exclaimed.

"Maybe you'll feel like sayin' somethin' when ther rope gits around your neck," remarked the other miner, imitating the motions of a man getting hanged.

Carpenter turned pale.

"Dan Glick is a mighty good friend of mine," he ventured, "an' if he wanted his mine back an' asked me ter help him out it was my business ter do it."

"Cut the rascal loose, Charlie," said Wild, suddenly.

The scout looked surprised, but he did not hesitate to obey.

"Are yer goin' ter let him go?" asked one of the miners.

"Yes, I want him to go to his friends and tell them something."

"But he may skip ther camp."

"Well, if he knows when he's well off he will."

"You're putty good ter a galoot what done his best ter lay yer out, I think."

"I always give a man all the show in the world," replied our hero. "Sometimes they don't know when to accept the chance to save their lives, though."

Jim happened to be looking in the direction of the tavern, and when he saw Glick and the other two villains coming out he turned to Wild and exclaimed:

"There they are!"

"Going around to get their friends together, I suppose," said Wild. "Well, if they only knew it they would consider that I am about the best friend they have got in Silver Bullet just now, for I am going to give them a chance for their lives. Say!"

He directed his gaze upon Carpenter and continued:

"You just run along and tell Glick and the other two fellers that they have got just half an hour to get out of the camp. If they are not away in that time lead is going to fly! Do you hear what I say?"

"I hear yer," was the reply.

"Well, the same thing applies to you, do you understand?"

"All right," and the man looked a bit relieved.

"Run along, now, and don't let the grass grow under your feet, for I might change my mind and make a target of you."

The villain did not need to be told twice.

He ran as fast as he had done in a long time and soon reached the saloon, where he knew he would likely find Glick and the others.

Glick was standing at the bar with half a dozen clustered about him when Carpenter rushed in.

He looked surprised when he saw him.

"So they didn't lynch yer, hey, Tom?" he asked.

"No," was the retort; "but I've got jest half an hour from ther time I left them ter git out of Silver Bullet, though."

"So that's it, hey?"

"Yes, an' that's what you fellers has got, too. You have either got ter leave in half an hour or lead will fly. That's what Young Wild West says."

"Ther galoot ain't born yet what kin make me leave ther camp!" exclaimed Glick, bringing his fist upon the bar with a bang that made the bottles and glasses jingle.

The villain who had been wounded by Charlie stood next to him, having his arm tied up by a friend.

He was very pale, and when he heard the word Carpenter brought he seemed ready to drop.

But the exclamation of Glick caused him to cheer up some.

"Do yer think they mean business?" he asked, turning to Glick.

"I don't care if they do," was the reply. "I reckon I

kin shoot jest as quick as Young Wild West kin, an' I know I've got more friends in Silver Bullet than he has."

"You're all right, Dan," spoke up the saloonkeeper. "I reckon it won't be much of a shindy when it takes place. Ther fresh young galoot won't have as much luck at drop-pin' yer as he did in buyin' ther Straight Tip Mine."

"I reckon he won't," was the retort. "An' I'm ther boy what's goin' ter reap ther benefit of ther strike Young Wild West made in my mine."

A cheer went up from those around him.

Glick was so much encouraged by this that he ordered drinks for all hands.

"All's I want is a square show, boys," he said, as he placed his empty glass down. "Young Wild West an' his pards will say as how we tried ter drop 'em while they was workin' in ther mine; but that's a lie! We jest went there ter see if it was a fact that they had struck a rich vein, an' then one of 'em up an' lets poor Cortright have it. Then they lets a bullet go at Mike here an' it fetched him in ther arm. We done some firin', too, then, but we didn't fetch any of 'em. You all know me! I'm white as snow an' a yard wide every time!"

Another cheer went up.

It had not yet died out when the door opened and in came Wild and his two partners.

"Dan Glick," said our hero, coolly stepping up to him, "did you get the message I sent to you?"

"Yes, I got it, Young Wild West," was the retort; "an' I want ter tell yer that I'm goin' ter stay in Silver Bullet a blamed sight longer than you will!"

The villain placed his hand on the butt of his revolver. Crack!

Wild fired as quick as a flash and the bullet grazed the back of Glick's hand, causing him to let out a yell and let go the shooter.

CHAPTER VII.

WILD REFORMS A MAN.

"Dan Glick, you have got just half an hour from the time you received the message to get out of Silver Bullet!" exclaimed Young Wild West, keeping his smoking revolver on a line with the villain's heart.

Two or three of Glick's friends made moves as though they were going to draw their shooters.

"Hold on!" spoke up Cheyenne Charlie; "ther first galoot what pulls a gun will go under!"

Then there was a silence which lasted half a minute, during which all sorts of glances were exchanged by the inmates of the saloon.

Glick was the first one to speak.

"I don't know why yer should drive us out of ther camp, Young Wild West," he said, speaking slowly and trying to be impressive. "We ain't done nothin' ter you.

It was you what opened up ther game, an' yer shot poor Abe Cortright."

A dangerous glitter came in the eyes of Young Wild West.

He stepped up to Glick, and, placing his finger on the end of his nose, exclaimed:

"You know you lie when you say that, you cowardly hound! You came down in the mine for the express purpose of getting us in a tight place. When you appeared before us you told us that we were to die. Then you fired half a dozen shots without hitting a thing. You know why your friend fell; he dropped because, instead of holding up his hands, as he was told to do, he let a bullet go at Cheyenne Charlie. Charlie sent one back and then your friend dropped. The whole thing is that you want to finish us so you can get the silver mine back. But there are not enough of your friends in Silver Bullet to put the finish to us, and there are only three of us! Do you hear what I say, you sneaking coward? Take that for lying!"

Wild lost his temper completely for the moment and struck the villain with the back of his hand, sending him reeling halfway across the room.

At this the saloonkeeper spoke up:

"I reckon this is my place, an' that I kin have who I please in it. Young Wild West, you an' your pards kin light out. You ain't wanted in here!"

"What's that, you wall-eyed galoot!" roared Cheyenne Charlie, turning upon the man with flashing eyes. "This are a public place, an' it are located in Silver Bullet Camp, Larimer County, Colorady, an' that bein' ther case we'll go out when we git good an' ready."

"That's right, my friend," said Wild, nodding to bear out what the scout said. "You just take my advice and keep still. If you don't you might give it away that you are in the game to kill me and get the benefits of the Straight Tip mine."

The man said no more.

Wild took his watch from his pocket.

"I guess the four galoots who tried so hard to wipe us out in the mine a little while ago have got just about twenty minutes left in which to get out of the camp," he said, coolly.

"It'll come putty hard on me, 'cause I've got a wife an' baby here in Silver Bullet," spoke up Carpenter.

"Is that right?" our hero asked, as he flashed a glance at the men in the place.

"Yes, Tom's married an' got a leetle baby," answered one of the miners, while several others nodded to bear him out.

"Well, Carpenter, you go home to your wife and child, and if I catch you loafing your time away around a bar-room again I'll shoot the buttons off your coat!"

"Are yer goin' back on us, Tom?" Dan Glick asked, as the man moved for the door.

"My wife an' child comes first, Dan," was the reply.

"Humph! That's ther first I ever knowed yer took much interest in 'em. Yer would rather hang around an'

drink rum than bother with yer wife an' child. I'll bet they ain't got a thing ter eat in ther shanty this very minute!"

"Maybe they ain't, Dan. It makes me feel all ther more what a fool I've been. I 'preciate what Young Wild West jest said, an' you kin gamble on it that, from this time out, I'm goin' ter be a different man!"

With that Carpenter went out.

The man's words made a deep impression on everybody in the saloon.

Those who had been ready to take the part of Glick hung their heads.

It had come very forcibly to them that Carpenter had been doing anything but right in the way he treated his family.

We will follow the man who had suddenly made up his mind to lead a different life.

The shanty he occupied was not more than five minutes' walk from the saloon.

Near it was the mine he had worked with Cortright.

There was a look in the miner's eyes such as had never been there before probably as he opened the door and walked in.

A rather young woman, clothed in anything but decent apparel, was seated on a rickety chair holding a year-old child on her lap.

"Goin' ter git supper putty soon, Mary?" asked the man, as he came in and stood before her.

"There ain't a thing in the house to cook, Tom," was the reply, as the woman looked at him wonderingly.

"There ain't, eh? Well, you bet there soon will be! Here, Mary!" and he put his hand in his pocket and drew out all the money he had. "I reckon there's goin' ter be a change in ther way this shanty has been run. You jest take this an' go to ther store an' git what's wanted fur ther house. There's eighteen dollars there, so don't stint on ther grub. I'll have some more as soon as I've worked another day. I'm goin' ter work every day now, an' I'm goin' ter give you all ther money I git hold of 'cept what I want fur tobacker. I ain't goin' ter drink another drop of rum as long as I live, Mary! You kin bet your last cent on that!"

The woman looked at him in a dumb sort of way.

She tried to rise from the chair, but was unable to do so.

But a look of joy suddenly came over her face, for she could see that her husband was in deadly earnest.

"Oh, Tom!" she cried. "Can this be true, or am I dreaming one of the pleasant dreams I have so often done?"

"It's true, Mary," was the choking reply, for Carpenter was crying like a child now, he not being able to help it.

"Jest give me ther baby an' you run over ter ther store like a good girl. Furget that there was ever anything wrong, won't yer?"

To prove to her conclusively that he meant it, he kissed her on the forehead and gently stroked her hair.

Anyone with a heart in him would have declared it an affecting scene.

Tears fell from the eyes of both husband and wife, and it is safe to say that Tom Carpenter had never felt so mean before.

But he had resolved to change his ways, and that gave him a hope such as had never come into his breast before.

A few minutes later the wife put on her hat and shawl and went to the store.

She came back in due time with the articles that went to make up a good, wholesome meal.

Carpenter had the fire burning briskly and the child was crawling on a bit of ragged carpet before it.

The woman had dried her tears, and the way she set about to get the supper ready told that a new life had suddenly been born in her.

It was getting dark when the meal was ready, so the oil lamp was lighted, and then they sat down and ate their supper.

"I can't eat very much now, Mary," said the miner. "There's too much rum in me fur that. But I'll do better later on. It is all on account of what Young Wild West said to me that I've changed, an' I hope I'll die if I don't stick to it."

"Who is Young Wild West, Tom?" asked the wife, opening wide her eyes.

"He's ther whitest young feller what ever was born," was the reply. "I was helpin' Dan Glick, along with Abe Cortright an' two others, ter kill an' rob him an' his two partners. Young Wild West got ther best of us, jest as we thought we had him dead ter rights, an' Cortright went under. Young Wild West didn't shoot ther rest of us—an' he could have done it easy enough—but he jest told us that we had half an hour ter git out of Silver Bullet. Then I thought of you an' ther baby, Mary. It was ther first time I thought so much of yer since ther week after we was married down in Denver. I told him that I had a wife an' child, an' that I didn't like ter leave ther camp on that account. Then he tells me ter come home an' take care of yer, as I ought ter, an' that he wouldn't make me git out. Well, I made up my mind jest at that minute that I was never goin' ter drink another drop, an' that I was goin' ter work steady an' do ther right thing by yer as long as I live!"

"I would like to see Young Wild West and thank him, Tom."

"You shall, then. I'll go over an' fetch him an' his pards here. He's only a boy, Mary, but he's a deadshot, an' he kin control a gang better than ten like me could. There's somethin' about him when he looks at yer an' talks that makes yer feel as though you've got ter do what he says. Young Wild West has made a man out of me, Mary."

Then the woman burst into tears again.

It was all so good that she was afraid it could not be true.

But a look into the eyes of her husband told her that

there was no mistake about it, and a few minutes later, when he got up and put on his coat and hat to go out and get Young Wild West to come to the shanty so she might have the opportunity to thank him personally for the good he had wrought in their little home, she nodded approvingly and had not the least fear that he would start to drinking again and fail to come back.

Carpenter did not stop at the saloon, for he met a miner who told him that our friends had gone back to the Straight Tip mine.

"Where's Dan Glick?" he asked.

"Oh, he left jest afore ther half hour was up. Ther other two galoots went with him, an' ther boys all think it's ther best thing what could happen. I don't think that Dan means ter go very far away, though. In my opinion, he means ter try an' lay Young Wild West an' his men low. Glick's a very bad man when he gits started once, yer know."

"Yes, but he'd better leave Young Wild West alone. He knows he oughter, too."

"Well, if he don't it ain't no fault of ourn. I'm glad that he didn't make you leave, too, Tom. You've got a wife an' baby, an' they must be took care of."

"An' yer kin bet your boots that they will be took care of!" exclaimed Tom, his eyes flashing. "I've been a fool, I have! But I'm done now. Never ag'in will yer see me hangin' around drunk, spendin' ther money what oughter go ter my wife. Not much, my boy! Ther gang kin laugh at me if they wanter, but that won't make no difference."

"I ain't seen one of 'em what laughed, Tom," was the reply.

Carpenter headed straight for the Straight Tip mine now.

It was dark, but he soon saw the light in the shanty that was occupied by Wild and his partners.

As he rapidly neared it the figure of a man suddenly stepped from some bushes and barred his way.

It was Dan Glick!

The miner gave a start.

"You ain't gone, then, Dan?" he asked in surprise.

"Not yet, Tom," was the reply. "I only made out that I was goin'. You oughter know that I wouldn't leave Silver Bullet fur Young Wild West, or no other galoot livin'. I ain't quite a fool yet, Tom Carpenter!"

"Well, you know your own business best, Dan," retorted the miner, shrugging his shoulders uneasily.

"I know your business, too, Tom."

"What do yer mean, Dan?"

"I'll tell yer! It's your business ter help me an' ther boys out. It's your business ter go an' kill Young Wild West an' his pards in that shanty over there!"

"Yer couldn't git me ter hurt a hair in ther heads of them fellers, Dan Glick! I'm a different man now. I've reformed. It ain't too late fur you ter reform, either. You kin go ter some other place an' begin life all over

ag'in. You done wrong, an' yer know it. Take my advice as a friend, Dan, an' make up your mind ter do different."

"You fool, you!" hissed Glick, and then he whipped a keen-edged knife from his belt. "If that's ther way you think you kin die, Tom Carpenter!"

He raised the knife and darted for the miner who had turned over a new leaf in the book of life.

The attack was so unexpected that Carpenter must certainly have fallen before the villain had not something intervened in his behalf.

Crack!

The sharp report of a revolver sounded a few feet away and the murderous knife fell with a ring to the rocky ground.

Dan Glick uttered an oath and darted into the bushes.

That he had a horse close at hand was evident, for the next moment the clatter of receding hoofs was heard.

"What's the trouble here?" said a voice, and then who should appear before Carpenter but Young Wild West!

CHAPTER VIII.

GLICK PUTS UP A NOTICE.

Young Wild West and his partners had not waited at the saloon until Dan Glick and the other two villains went away, but they watched them from the shanty on the claim, and saw them ride away on horseback.

Wild did not think that they would go far.

He knew that Glick was altogether too vindictive to leave without trying to get square.

So they were on the lookout for the villains.

Our friends ate their supper just as it got dark, and after the meal was over Wild went out alone to look around the mine and see if anyone was lurking around it.

He found everything all straight there and then took a walk down the path that led to the business part of the mining camp.

It occurred to him to go and get some cigars, for they did not intend to leave the shanty that night.

So he walked over to the Silver Bullet Tavern, bought the cigars, had a little chat with Sedgwick, the proprietor, and then started back for the shanty.

It was just then that Tom Carpenter was heading that way, and, recognizing him, Wild decided to follow him and see what he was up to.

He did not know for certain that the man meant to turn over a new leaf, and it occurred to him that he might be going somewhere to meet the three who had left the camp.

When he finally saw Carpenter halted by no other than Glick he concluded that the miner was sticking to his old associates after all, and that he had come there to do them a friendly turn.

Wild drew his revolver and had it ready for use.

He listened to the conversation with interest, and when

he heard Carpenter declare that he was going to do right and advise Glick to do the same, a nod of satisfaction was given by the dashing young deadshot.

He was less than ten feet from the two, and he made up his mind to capture Glick and turn him over to the miners and let them mete out the punishment he deserved.

Just then the scoundrel leaped upon the reformed man and raised his knife to stab him.

Wild could see the glint of the blade in the light that came from the window of his shanty, and, as quick as a flash, he drew bead upon it and fired.

Then it was that he stepped forward and asked what the trouble was.

"It was Dan Glick!" said Carpenter, with a gasp of surprise. "He meant ter fix me, Young Wild West. You shot jest in time ter save my life."

"I guess I did," was our hero's retort. "It's too bad I didn't shoot the scoundrel, for he has got away now. I had no idea he had a horse so close by."

"Well, most likely he'll go away for fair now."

"Not he," said Wild. "He will come back to get his medicine, Carpenter. He wants to be hanged or shot, I guess, and he won't be satisfied until it happens."

"Well, I tried ter talk ter him reasonable-like. It ain't never too late ter mend, so they say."

"That's right. But where were you going when Glick stopped you?"

"To your shanty."

"Ah! Come on, then. I have just been over to get some cigars at the tavern. We will let Glick go. I don't care to give him a chase to-night. The chances are that he will show up between now and morning, and then his finish will be at hand."

"I reckon he don't mean ter go, as you say. But if he don't he'll make a mistake. I s'pose he does feel awful sore on me, 'cause we was always good friends."

Carpenter did not talk as though he felt hard against the villain for trying to take his life.

Wild led him into the shanty, which Hop Wah had fixed up quite home-like.

Charlie and Jim nodded pleasantly, and after he had returned the salute Carpenter said:

"Young Wild West, my wife wants yer ter come over to our shanty so she kin thank yer fur makin' me turn over a new leaf. She would like ter see your pards, too."

"Well, since Dan Glick is around I guess we had better not all go away from the shanty at one time. Charlie and Jim will stay here, and I will go over with you, just to satisfy your wife."

"Dan Glick around, did you say, Wild?" asked Jim Dart.

"Yes," and then he told him what had just happened.

"Ther sneakin' galoot!" cried Cheyenne Charlie. "Jest let me run 'cross him once! There won't be no more trouble from Dan Glick!"

Before he left the shanty with Wild, Carpenter told

them just what he had said and done when he went home to his wife and baby.

"An' yer kin bet I'm goin' ter be a man hereafter!" he added. "You brought me ter my full senses, Young Wild West."

"Well, I am very glad of it, I am sure," was the reply.

They went out and headed for the shanty occupied by the reformed miner.

Wild was keeping a sharp watch as they walked along, for he thought it might be that Glick was still around waiting for a chance to get in some of his dirty work.

But no one interfered with them, and they soon got to the shanty.

Carpenter's wife burst into tears the moment Young Wild West was introduced to her.

"You shouldn't cry, Mrs. Carpenter," he said; "you should feel more like laughing, now that your husband is going to do the right thing and treat you and the baby as they should be treated."

"It is from joy that I am crying, Mr. West," she answered. "Oh! I don't believe there is a happier woman this side of the Mississippi than I am!"

She was smiling through her tears now, and in a little while she was talking away just as though nothing had ever disturbed her.

Wild held the baby a few minutes and made it a present of a five-dollar goldpiece.

He was satisfied that Carpenter had really reformed if ever a man had, and when the man told him to shoot him dead if he ever caught him drinking whisky again he knew he meant it.

He bade the couple good-night after a short stay and then wended his way back to the claim.

If Glick and his two friends were around anywhere they did not show up, so he went in and joined Charlie and Jim in a game of dominoes.

When it was time to go to bed our hero looked at his partners and said:

"Gosh, it strikes me that Dan Glick will show up before mornin'. We had better keep a watch, I think."

"All right," answered the scout. "I'll stay up till twelve an' play dominoes with Hop. It's about ther only game he can't cheat at, an' I've got as good a show as he has. I'll take a peep outside every few minutes."

This was satisfactory to Wild and Jim, so they promptly turned in and were soon asleep.

It was quite an interesting game that Charlie and the Chinaman got into, for the latter would have it that they must play for money.

But it was a small amount, so neither could be injured much.

The game was what is called "muggins," wherein each player takes five pieces and plays them so the ends will count five, ten, fifteen or twenty, as the case may be. If a player has not the piece to match he must draw from those that are left on the board.

There was really not much of a chance for any cheating,

providing one had sharp eyes and watched every piece that was played.

But Hop was bound to get the best of Charlie somehow.

He began to get in his work by taking four pieces instead of five.

Three times he won the hand on the strength of this little scheme, and the scout made up his mind that the Celestial was very hard to beat.

But the fifth time Hop did the trick Charlie caught him at it.

He said nothing, however, till Hop went domino.

Then he pushed three pieces over and said:

"You jest take them an' go on playin'; you ain't domino yet. You only had four pieces ter start with. I don't know how many times you've worked it, but yer kin take three pieces an' we'll call it square."

"Me no undelstand," protested Hop, but that made no difference.

Charlie was bound to have his way about it, and Hop knew it would hardly do for him to object.

So they played it out that way and the scout won the game.

It was the first one he had won, too, and he was satisfied to quit now.

"I reckon I'll go out an' look around," he said, as he arose from the table and put on his hat.

He went outside and was just in time to catch a glimpse of a dark form disappearing in the bushes off to the left.

Charlie fired without waiting an instant.

A mocking laugh came to his ears, and then he knew he had not made a mistake in taking the figure for an enemy.

But he had missed him when he fired owing to the darkness.

"You'd better git a good distance between Silver Bullet an' you afore daylight, Glick!" he called out. "You ain't long fur this world if yer stay around these diggin's."

Crack, crack, crack!

Three shots were fired from the bushes, all hitting the shanty, and then the scout heard the sounds made by horses galloping away.

At this juncture Wild and Jim came rushing outside.

They heard the horses.

"So Glick has been trying it again, has he?" observed our hero. "Well, I never saw a man who seemed so ready to die as he does. Just wait till daylight. I'll take up his trail then, and it won't be long before we have a final understanding."

They all went into the shanty a few minutes later, and then, though a watch was kept during the balance of the night, nothing more was seen or heard of the villains.

After they had breakfast Wild went over to the store for something they needed, and when he got there he found a curious crowd gathered before a placard that was stuck up on the side of the building.

He walked over to it and quickly read the following:

NOTISS TO MY FRIENDS.

All them what is goin' ter stick ter me let 'em meet me at ther Straight Tip Mine nine o'clock this morning. I am going to clean out Young Wild West and Get my mine back. There is munny in it fur all my friends.

DAN GLICK.

"That is quite an invitation, I must say," Wild remarked to the man standing nearest him. "I wonder how many friends Glick has got left, anyway?"

"I reckon he's got a few," was the retort, and then our hero knew he was talking to one of them.

"Well, just let them come over to the Straight Tip mine, as that notice calls them to. I'll show them that the mine belongs to me, and that Dan Glick, or no one else will get it until I get good and ready to sell it."

"S'posin' about twenty or thirty was ter come over an' side in with Dan?" questioned the man.

"That won't make any difference. Fifty can come if they feel like doing so. I suppose you will be one to come, so before you do I advise you to make arrangements with the undertaker, and if you want to leave your belongings to anyone in particular you had better make your will."

The man happened to be one who had not met Young Wild West before, though he had heard all about him.

But hearing is not as good as seeing, so he did not give the boy the credit of being what others said he was.

He had it in his head that he was not afraid of him, and he thought it a good chance to show that he was not right before the crowd around the store.

"I reckon you're quite a bragger, fur a boy," he ventured.

"Do you think so?" Wild asked, looking at him and smiling good-naturedly. "What is your name?"

"My name is Dave Skinner," replied the miner, drawing himself to his full height and trying to look fierce.

"Well, Mr. Skinner, if you are a friend of Dan Glick and approve of what he has done, you are no good! How does that strike you?"

"It strikes me that I'm goin' ter grab yer by ther nape of ther neck an' hit yer heels ag'in ther side of ther buildin' here!" retorted the man. "Yer kin git ready; an' jest remember that this ain't no shootin' or knife game. I ain't a galoot what would use a weepoon on a boy like you!"

"Oh! all right, Mr. Skinner. Just let yourself go! I am all ready."

"You said I was no good, an' I'm goin' ter make yer say that I'm ther best yer ever seen."

"All right, my friend; just let yourself go!"

"Here I come!" roared Skinner, and with that he made a leap for the daring young deadshot.

Then something happened to him that he never forgot as long as he lived.

CHAPTER IX.

GLICK FAILS TO KEEP HIS PROMISE.

Wild had no intention of hurting the man, but he did mean to show him that he did not know much about wrestling or rough-and-tumble fighting.

As Skinner rushed for him he stepped aside deftly and then sprang forward and caught him over his hip.

The miner's boots cut a circle through the air and he landed on his head and neck on the ground with a thud.

"Did you feel anything, Skinner?" Wild asked, as he laughed in the surprised man's face. "Quite a jar, wasn't it?"

"Thunder!" gasped Skinner, as he got into a sitting posture and felt of the back of his head to see if it was all there.

"No, it wasn't thunder that did it. I simply turned you over, that's all. Get up and I'll do it again."

"You never done that alone!" retorted Skinner, as he got up and shook himself. "Somebody else had a hand in it."

He looked at the grinning crowd and then got very mad.

"Look out fur me!" he yelled; "I'm goin' ter chuck yer over ther top of ther store!"

Wild met his rush squarely this time, for he depended upon his quickness and strength to fix the fellow before he had a chance to do anything.

He caught him by the belt and gave him a push in the stomach, that took the wind from him, at the same time.

Then he dropped low and caught his ankle with his left hand.

Wild then straightened up with wonderful quickness and had the big miner above his head.

There was a horse trough in front of the store and it was nearly full of water.

It was just about big enough to admit the form of Skinner.

The dashing young deadshot was there in a twinkling. Splash!

Skinner came down into the trough and the water flew in every direction.

"Now you behave yourself, or I'll be compelled to shoot you full of holes," Wild said, as he folded his arms and watched the man trying to get out of the trough.

Skinner managed to roll out and then he sat on the ground.

The bystanders were roaring with laughter now. Some of them knew of the prowess of Young Wild West and others did not.

But they were all satisfied that he was a regular wonder from Wonderville, as one of them put it.

Skinner arose to his feet in a minute or two.

The expression on his countenance was one of surprise, and not the least bit of anger shone in his eyes.

"Stumped, by jingo!" he said. "I'm sorry I tackled yer, Young Wild West."

"You talk like a man, and I guess you are a pretty good one, after all," Wild answered. "I don't believe you have any sympathy with Dan Glick in his determination to kill me and take the mine I bought away from me."

"No, I ain't got ther least sympathy fur him, an' if I had I reckon you've knocked it all out of me."

He put out his hand and Wild shook hands with him.

"Hooray fur Young Wild West!" yelled the man who kept the store.

The cheers were given with a will.

"Thank you, boys," said our hero, when they became silent. "I guess you had better know all about what Dan Glick has been up to since I came to Silver Bullet with my two partners."

He then told them in a few words what Glick had done and tried to do, not forgetting the villain's attempt of the life of Tom Carpenter the night before.

"Dan don't stand no show here any more," said Dave Skinner, shaking his head in a solemn manner. "I used ter think a whole lot of him, but he's gone an' done things that he hadn't oughter do, an' if he knows when he's well off he'll git as far away from Silver Bullet as he kin, an' that in a hurry, too."

The man was dripping with water from his sudden bath in the horse trough, and he made a rather comical picture as he stood there.

But no one laughed at him just then.

They all felt that he spoke words of wisdom.

"Well," said Wild, after he had made his purchase in the store, "I guess you fellows had better come over to the Straight Tip mine at nine o'clock and see what happens. Glick may come around ready to finish me, and if he does you will see something that will interest you, perhaps."

"Oh, we'll be there, but not ter help Glick," Skinner assured him.

The boy went back to the shanty, and when he told Charlie and Jim what had happened over at the store they both laughed heartily.

"I never saw a fellow take a ducking as good-naturedly as Skinner did," Wild said. "I am certain that he don't bear the least bit of grudge against me. And I gave it to him good and strong, too. He was greatly surprised."

"Well, it is a good thing that he took it that way," remarked Jim.

"It shows that ther galoot has got a little sense," added the scout.

Wild felt pretty sure that Glick would show up around nine o'clock, so he put off going down in the mine until after that time.

About fifteen minutes before nine a crowd of miners came over.

Skinner was with them, and he appeared to be a sort of leader.

Our friends sized them up and came to the conclusion

that Glick might have half a dozen sympathizers among them.

"If that fellow shows up," said Wild, "he has got more nerve than I give him credit for having."

"I reckon he's got quite some nerve, Wild," answered the scout. "He thinks that he'll have as many as half the miners on his side, and that we won't dare ter do anything ter him."

"That's the way I think," spoke up Jim.

"Well, if he comes he'll wish he hadn't," Wild said.

By nine o'clock there were at least fifty men gathered at the Straight Tip mine.

Dr. Duck drove up with his wagon and started in to sell his patent medicine.

He struck the crowd just right, for after he had delivered a neat little speech extolling the virtues of his Health Preserver he began to do a rushing business.

But Dan Glick failed to put in appearance.

The doctor kept on saying funny things and selling his medicine, and finally when there came a little lull Hop Wah stepped up to the wagon and asked to look at a bottle of the stuff.

"Velly nicee medicine?" he said, questioningly.

"The very best in the world, my Chinee friend," was the reply. "I will guarantee that if you take three bottles according to directions you will live to be a hundred years old."

Hop had heard that the medicine was composed largely of cheap whisky, and he felt that he ought to try a bottle.

But he did not propose to pay five dollars for it.

Dan Glick or one of the villains who had attacked Wild and his partners the day before in the mine had dropped an empty bottle near the mouth of the shaft and Hop had found it.

It contained the label of the medicine, and at a distance it might pass off for a full bottle.

But Hop was not going to pass it off at a distance for a full bottle.

He was going to get a full bottle for it, and he meant that the doctor would give it to him.

When he thought over it he decided that he ought to manage to get two bottles for it.

"Me likee havee bottle," he said, and it was promptly handed to him.

Without bothering to look at it, he slipped it under his loose-fitting gown into one of his pockets.

"My uncle gleet mandarin in China," he said, smiling at the doctor and his assistant. "Me sendee him bottle putty soonee."

"You had better pay me for the bottle you just bought before you forget it," said the doctor, winking at the crowd as though he knew that the Chinaman was trying to flimflam him out of the money.

"Oh! me forgittee to pay," said Hop, innocently. "Me lookee at um medicine and see if um allee light; len me pay."

Then he pulled a bottle from under his gown and began to look it over carefully.

"Velly funny," he said, looking at Dr. Duck, with affected amazement. "Medicine allee outte bottle."

He held it up and, sure enough, everyone saw that he spoke the truth.

"That is curious," remarked the doctor, looking sternly at his assistant. "Could there have been an empty bottle in the lot?"

"There wasn't nothin' but full ones in them what I took out," was the reply. "You might have got hold of an empty one yourself."

"I must have, then. But I don't understand how an empty bottle came to be there."

"Me no undelstand, either," spoke up the Chinaman.

"Well, give me that bottle; I'll give you another for it."

Hop took the full bottle and looked it over carefully and then placed it in his pocket.

"Now hand over five dollars, please," said the doctor, who was wondering how it was that he came to have an empty bottle in his wagon.

"Whatte for?" asked Hop, looking at him in innocent surprise.

"Why, for the bottle of Health Preserver I just sold you. You surely ought to know that you did not pay for it yet."

"Me givee empty bottle for ddis," said the Chinaman, pulling out the medicine and holding it up.

"I know you did. But you never paid me for the empty bottle, did you?"

"Whattee me pay for um empty bottle for? Lat no goodee."

Wild could not help laughing at the way the Celestial was fooling the doctor.

The majority of the miners thought that Hop was right.

Dr. Duck really thought that Hop was in earnest in what he said.

He tried to explain that he had received no money whatever, and that he had given him a bottle of the Health Preserver.

"You didn't pay for the bottle I gave you at first," he said.

"Whattee me pay for um empty bottle for?" Hop retorted, looking around to find those who thought he was right.

"But you didn't pay for the empty bottle, nor have you paid for the full one," insisted the doctor.

"You givee me empty bottle; me no pay. Whattee me pay for? Empty bottle no goodee. Len me givee you empty bottle for fullee bottle. Lat allee light; evelything square now. You givee me bottle no goodee; me givee you no goodee bottle and you givee me goodee bottle. You makee allee light. Velly muchee nicee doctor."

Everybody was laughing by this time, and the doctor began to realize that he was going to lose the price of a bottle of the medicine.

But he decided to let it go, as it was a big advertisement and more of the men were beginning to buy.

Hop walked into the shanty, followed by Cheyenne Charlie.

With a grin on his yellow face, he pulled out two of the full bottles and sat them on the table.

"How in thunder did yer git two of 'em, Hop?" Charlie asked.

"Velly easy," was the rejoinder; "me findee empty bottle and me puttee in um pocket. Doctor velly muchee easy; he no know."

The scout thought it was so good that he went out and told it to Tom Carpenter, who was in the crowd, he having been one of the first to come over.

Carpenter told it to those near him, and it soon spread that the Chinaman had beaten the doctor out of two bottles of his medicine.

As Glick had failed to put in appearance, the miners had had something to amuse them, anyhow.

They remained there for over an hour, and when they finally decided to go to their work Dr. Duck had sold quite a number of the bottles, in spite of the fact that Hop had beaten him out of two.

"That is a very smart Chinaman you have got, Young Wild West," said the doctor, as he was getting in his wagon to ride back to the tavern.

"He certainly is a smart fellow," was the reply.

"Well, I hope the medicine he got for nothing will be a great benefit to him."

"It may be ther worst thing he could tackle, fur it might start him off ter git drunk," replied the scout.

The doctor laughed good-naturedly.

"I can't seem to make you people believe that my medicine is any good," he said.

"Well, I guess we don't need to take any of it," spoke up Wild.

"Perhaps not. But it would make you feel younger than you are if you were to take a couple of bottles according to directions."

As the wagon started off for the tavern our friends were left alone again.

"Jim and I will go down and work until noon, Charlie," observed our hero. "Someone is needed to stay here and keep out a watch."

"All right," nodded the scout; "I'll be on ther lookout fur Glick. If he happens ter come you'll hear my shooter crack. Then you will know enough to come up."

Wild and Jim went down into the mine and started in to try and learn how far the vein of silver ran.

They had not been there more than fifteen minutes when they heard a revolver go off near the entrance to the mine.

CHAPTER X.

GLICK KEEPS ON LOOKING FOR REVENGE.

Charlie stood in the doorway of the shanty smoking his pipe, while the Chinaman was clearing away the remains of their breakfast.

The scout was looking around pretty well as he smoked, and presently his eyes lighted upon three horsemen away back on the trail a mile away.

They were heading for Silver Bullet, as he could see, but they were so far off that he could not tell what they were.

But it was only a glimpse he got of them, anyhow, for they were quickly shut out of his view by a high projection of land.

The scout watched for several minutes, but the horsemen did not come riding into the camp, as he expected they would.

Then he grew a trifle suspicious.

"They didn't git as far as here, eh?" he muttered. "Well, where did they stop, an' what are they up ter, then? Jest like as not ther three galoots is Dan Glick an' his men. I'll jest sneak over there an' have a look."

Turning to the Chinaman, he told him to keep his eyes open for a few minutes and if anything happened to fire his revolver.

"Allee light, Misler Charlie. Where you go?" Hop queried.

"I'm jest goin' over ter ther other side of them bushes," was the reply. "I won't be gone more'n five minutes."

Hop made up his mind that he was not going to be caught napping this time.

He got his revolver out, and then coming outside began walking back and forth from the door of the shanty to the mine shaft.

He kept looking in every direction, too, and as Charlie disappeared in the bushes, he gave a nod and exclaimed:

"Me velly muchee watchee; no badde Melican man foolee Hop Wah."

For five minutes he strutted back and forth after the fashion of a Chinese soldier, and there were no signs of Charlie coming back yet.

Hop walked down to the top of the shaft again and paused.

As he looked around he saw the form of a man crawling toward the shanty.

It was not Cheyenne Charlie, as he could tell at a glance.

He recognized the fellow.

It was Dan Glick!

Hop turned his revolver at the sneaking villain and pulled the trigger.

Crack!

As the report rang out Glick got upon his feet and ran with the speed of a deer.

He disappeared in the bushes before Hop thought about firing another shot.

Crack!

Crack!

Two shots rang out in quick succession from the direction Cheyenne Charlie had taken when he left the shanty.

"Hello, up there!" came from the bottom of the shaft.

It was Young Wild West's voice.

"Comee up putty quick, Misler Wild!" shouted the Chinaman. "Allee samee velly funny t'ings here."

When he saw the rope working through the block he lent a hand and the bucket soon reached the surface.

Wild and Jim sprang out in a hurry.

"What is the trouble, Hop? Where's Charlie?" Wild asked, hurriedly.

"Dan Glick comee here; tly gittee in um shanty; me shootee putty quick and he runnee 'way. Misler Charlie over lare; shootee two timee."

That is the way the Celestial answered, but it was sufficient to let Wild and Jim know what was going on.

He pointed out the way Dan Glick had run, and just then Charlie appeared.

"They was around ag'in, Wild!" the scout exclaimed. "I jest winged one of 'em, but it wasn't Glick, though."

Wild and Jim ran to the shanty and got their rifles.

Charlie shook his head.

"There ain't much use, unless yer mean ter ride after 'em till yer catch 'em," he said. "I think it would be jest as good ter wait till they come back ag'in, fur yer kin bet that Dan Glick will never leave Silver Bullet. I reckon he's made up his mind ter die right here."

"And that is just what he will do if he stays," spoke up Jim.

"I guess your judgment is good, Charlie," said Wild, after a moment's thought. "We won't bother to chase them."

Wild and Charlie had been getting the body of Abe Cortright ready to be hauled up so the undertaker of the camp would not be cheated out of a chance to make something.

If Cortright had no friends to foot the bill for burial the undertaker would be entitled to what money and valuables were found on the body.

If the friends paid the bill they would be entitled to what was on the dead man.

Seeing that there was to be no pursuit after the villains, Dart offered to go down with Hop and get the body up, while Wild and Charlie remained there to watch.

"Go ahead," said our hero.

They lost no time in getting down into the mine.

"You winged one of the galoots, eh, Charlie?" Wild asked, as they stood near the shanty waiting.

"Yes, I seen three galoots ridin' this way on ther trail over there. I watched fur 'em to show up along here, but they didn't. Then I told Hop ter shoot off his revolver if anything happened, an' went ter find out where they'd gone ter. It was quite a few minutes afore I come across ther two galoots what was with Glick, but Glick wasn't there. Jest then Hop fired, an' they turned an' seen me. One of 'em let a shot come at me an' ther bullet whistled so close ter my ear that I thought it had me. But I fired right away an' dropped him. Ther other feller jumped behind a rock an' got out of sight. Then I heard Glick's voice, an' then they went ridin' away, as I could tell by

ther sound of ther horses' hoofs. There's only two of 'em now, Wild."

"What fools those fellows are," said our hero, shaking his head. "Why couldn't they go away and let us alone after they were given the chance? Well, if they force us to it we'll have to finish them, that's all."

The body of Cortright was hauled up from the mine a few minutes later and then Wild told Hop to go and get the man who did the undertaking for the camp.

He came back a few minutes later with about a dozen who had been friends of the man following.

In half an hour both the body of Cortright and that of the man the scout had shot were put underground, and as no one offered to pay the bill, the undertaker took what he found in the clothes, which was enough to satisfy him for his trouble.

But let us follow Dan Glick, the villain who was so persistent in his efforts to kill Young Wild West and get back the mine he had sold.

Glick was not the sort to take too much of a risk.

So when the Chinaman fired at him he lost no time in running into the bushes and turning to the spot where he had left his two companions and their horses.

He heard two shots as he neared the place, and then he suddenly saw Cheyenne Charlie moving back toward the mine.

Dan raised his revolver and pulled the trigger to send a bullet into the back of the scout.

The hammer fell, but the cartridge refused to explode.

By that time Charlie was the other side of a point of rock.

Glick saw two of the horses standing close at hand, and as he ran for them he discovered the quivering form of one of his men.

The other was gone.

With a muttered oath, he leaped upon the back of his horse and darted away.

He could hear the other man riding ahead of him, and he soon caught up to him.

"So you was goin' ter leave me in ther lurch, hey, Mike?" he asked.

"I thought ye was dead, Dan," was the reply. "I made up me mind that I had better slope, 'cause I thought I was ther only one left."

"Well, it was the Chinees what fired at me, an' that's ther reason I didn't git plugged, I reckon, fur Young Wild West an' his pards don't miss very often, it seems."

"That's right. Say, Dan, don't yer think ye'd better give it up?"

"No!" was the quick reply. "I won't give it up until Young Wild West goes under!"

"All right, then. I said I'd stick to yer, an' yer kin bet I will, too! We're gittin' ther worst of it by inches, though, Dan. Two men shot an' one turned ag'in us, besides ther gang in the camp goin' back on us. We stand a mighty poor show, I reckon."

"Our turn will come, Mike. You can bet on it. Once

Young Wild West is plugged ther gang will come back to our side, see if they don't! An' then jest see what I'll do to that traitor Tom Carpenter! He'll wish he'd never seen me!"

The two rode away a little over a mile from the heart of the mining camp and then came to a halt on a little plateau that was thickly wooded by firs and other trees.

From here they could see the whole camp and not be seen themselves.

Though they could not get a very good view of the Straight Tip mine, they saw the miners come there and imagined that they had come for the purpose of burying the two men who had gone under in the fight against Young Wild West and his partners.

"We'll be all right here, Mike," said Dan, "'cause if they start out after us we kin see 'em in time ter git a good start, an' then they'll never catch us."

"That's right," his companion retorted. "I reckon we could git away all right if we wanted ter."

They remained on the little plateau until nearly noon.

Then Glick got it in his head to do something fiendish in the way of revenge.

"Mike," said he, suddenly, "we could ride around putty close ter ther shanty of Tom Carpenter without bein' seen, I reckon."

"Yes, Dan," was the reply, "we could do that easy enough, as we'd have woods all ther way ter hide us from ther miners."

"Well, we'll go over there right away, then."

"What fur, Dan?"

"We've got jest time ter set ther shanty on fire, so when Carpenter comes home ter git his dinner he'll find it too late ter save it."

"But s'pose we was ter set ther shanty on fire an' Tom's wife an' baby got burned up?"

"If they didn't git out in time it would serve Tom right, fur he's nothin' but a traitor, anyhow."

"I don't like ther idea of doin' anything that'll bring harm ter a woman an' a baby, Dan."

Mike shook his head to show that he meant what he said.

"Pshaw! Are you gittin' tender-hearted, too? Ther first thing yer know you'll be fer reformin', same as Carpenter did."

"No, I won't, Dan. I'm goin' ter stick ter you as long as I know what I'm doin'. Come on! I'll go over there with yer, an' if we don't git square on Tom Carpenter it'll be mighty funny!"

Mike was going to do something that he knew was not right, just because he did not want Glick to think that he was getting tender-hearted.

Human nature is a curious study.

The two men knew that they had less than twenty minutes to do the job if they wanted to get the shanty going before the miners started to come from their work.

They mounted their horses and rode around through

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 26.)

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the woods until they were right behind Carpenter's shanty. The nearest other building was probably two hundred feet away.

When they dismounted Dan Glick said he would do the firing, so Mike breathed a sigh of relief.

He crouched in the bushes and saw Glick creep up behind the shanty with a bunch of dried grass in his hand.

The little building stood on posts, so it would be easy to set it afire from beneath.

Glick gathered some more grass and leaves on the way, and when he got where he wanted to he shoved them under the shanty and struck a match.

Just then Mike saw Carpenter's wife come out of the shanty and start hurriedly toward the store.

"She's goin' after somethin' fur Tom's dinner, an' she's left ther baby in ther house," he thought. "Mike, if there ever was any good in yer, yer oughter think of it now. Why, ther innercent baby is liable ter git burned ter a crisp afore ther woman gits back! Kin I stand fur that? No! If Dan Glick calls this reformin', let him do it! But that fire ain't goin' ter be started!"

The good in the man had triumphed.

As quick as a flash he sprang to his feet and ran to the back of the shanty.

He got there just in time.

As Glick was about to apply the match to the dried grass and leaves he caught his arm and pulled him from the spot.

"Yer mustn't do it, Dan!" he exclaimed. "Anything but that!"

"What—in—thunder is—is ther matter with yer, Mike?" cried Glick, looking at him in amazement.

"Well, this here shanty ain't goin' ter be sot on fire, that's all!" was the reply.

CHAPTER XI.

MIKE'S PRESENTIMENT COMES TRUE.

It so happened that Tom Carpenter had come home a little early that morning.

He had made a good strike, and he was anxious to tell his wife about it.

He had come to the shanty about ten minutes before Dan Glick crept up to it for the purpose of setting it on fire.

After telling his wife of his great luck that morning he asked her to go to the store while he took care of the baby.

The woman had barely gone when Tom heard voices from the rear of the shanty.

He was surprised, and, putting the baby on the floor before the fire, he grabbed his hat and went out.

He was at the corner of the shanty just in time to hear

Mike say, "Well, this here shanty ain't goin' ter be sot on fire, that's all!"

Then it dawned upon him that Glick had been seeking revenge.

Carpenter had a revolver in his pocket, and, quickly drawing it, he sprang around the corner of the building.

"Good fur you, Mike!" he cried; "I reckon you're goin' ter reform, too. Dan Glick, I'll furgive yer if you'll promise ter go away ter some other place an' start life over ag'in!"

"I'll blow your brains out, yer sneakin' traitor!" Glick retorted, and he whipped out his shooter.

He would have fired straight at the man if it had not been for Mike.

He knocked the weapon from his hand before the trigger could be pulled.

"Dan, I'm compelled ter take yer a prisoner!" said Carpenter, stepping forward. "Hold up your hands!"

"Never!" shrieked the baffled villain, and then he darted for the spot where the two horses were waiting.

Neither Mike nor Carpenter followed him.

"I've got enough of ther game, Tom," said the former. "I'm goin' ter let yer turn me over ter Young Wild West."

They heard Glick riding away as fast as he could get his horse to go, and then both breathed a sigh of relief.

"Come on in ther house, Mike," said Tom, taking the man by the arm. "It may be that I kin fix it so you'll stand a show ter stay here an' live. It's never too late ter mend, yer know."

Tom took him inside and gave him a basin and towel and Mike washed up a bit.

In a little while the reformed miner's wife came back from the store.

She was surprised to find they had company for dinner, especially when she saw that it was one of the men who had been ordered to leave Silver Bullet.

She listened to what her husband said with interest, and when Mike, in a way that was quite dramatic told her how he could not stay in the bushes and set the shanty on fire because he thought the baby was alone inside, she burst into tears.

"Young Wild West will forgive you—I know he will!" she declared. "He has got a heart as big as an ox. I never met him but once, but I am sure that he will urge the miners to allow you to stay and lead a better life in Silver Bullet."

Carpenter's wife got the dinner ready and then they sat down and ate.

Mike had a pretty good appetite and he ate in silence.

After the meal was over Mrs. Carpenter happened to look out of the window and notice that Young Wild West was over on the store stoop.

She at once picked up her hat and shawl and left the shanty.

Her husband and Mike wondered where she was going

in such a hurry, but when they saw our hero they both knew.

"She's goin' ter fetch Young Wild West here," said Tom. "Now yer kin make up your mind that everything will be all right. Jest wait till he hears ther whole story."

Sure enough, the woman came back a few minutes later with Wild.

She had told him the substance of it all as she walked at his side, so he was not at all surprised when he came face to face with the man who had stuck to Dan Glick to the last man in an effort to take his life and those of his partners.

Our hero looked the man over and came to the conclusion that he had been utterly crushed.

"So you have found the error of your ways, have you?" he remarked. "Well, I rather like the way you acted when you stopped Glick from setting the shanty on fire. That showed that the goodness was not all dead in you. I'll see the boys and get them to agree to give you a chance to show what an honest fellow you can be. How does that strike you?"

"You're too good!" was the reply. "It don't seem right that you should give me a chance. Look at what I was tryin' so hard ter do to yer!"

"Well, if I am satisfied you ought to be."

"I'm more'n satisfied. But it won't do much good in you're givin' me a chance, fur Dan Glick will git me. He'll never let up till he gits square on me fur leavin' him!"

"I'll try and see to it that he don't get you," answered our hero. "Now you stay here until I fix things with the miners. It is a good time to do it now, for they will all be around the tavern and saloon before they go to work."

Wild went out and the first place he stopped in was the saloon.

He told those he found in there that the man known as Mike had stopped Glick from setting fire to Carpenter's shanty, and then quit him.

"We'll give him a chance to show that he means to be honest, boys," he added.

No one objected to it, so he went out and then headed for the tavern.

At the tavern Wild gave the whole story as he had heard it in the Carpenter shanty, and when he said Mike ought to have another chance a cheer went up.

Before he went back to the mine Wild stopped at the Carpenter shanty and told them that it was all right, and that Mike would be welcome to stay in Silver Bullet, so long as he acted square and showed that he meant to keep straight.

Our hero went away and then Tom Carpenter invited him to go and help him at his claim.

"I'll take ther old rifle along," he said, as he took the weapon down from where it had hung on the wall. "If Glick tries ter shoot us we'll have ter shoot back, that's all, Mike."

"All right," was the reply.

Both knew that all the miners would now be on the lookout for the villain, and that it would not be healthy for him to show up.

The claim Carpenter worked adjoined the property owned by the smelting company, and a good price had been offered for it a month or so before.

Carpenter and Cortright were joint owners of it then, but they had papers made out to the effect that if one should die the property would become that of the survivor.

That made Carpenter the sole owner now.

He knew that he could get a much larger price for the claim now, for he had struck a rich lead that morning.

"I reckon I'll sell out an' go ter Californy, Mike," he said, as they walked over to the claim. "I kin git enough out of it ter live comfortable out there by jest raisin' some grapes an' other fruits. It will jest suit Mary ter go there, an' it'll be nicer ter bring up ther baby where there ain't someone dyin' with his boots on every day or so."

When Mike got to helping Tom on the claim he cheered up somewhat, for there were claims on every side, and that meant that Dan Glick could not sneak up and surprise him.

But in spite of this, Mike's presentiment was going to come true.

Back in the bushes on a little hillside crouched Dan Glick at that very moment.

The scoundrel's eyes gleamed like those of a fiend, and anyone to look at him just then would have proclaimed him to be stark, staring mad.

And so he was—crazed on the one subject of getting revenge upon those who had gone back on him.

When he rode away from the Carpenter shanty the villain got it in his head that he must have a rifle, so he could use it from a distance and make himself safe.

He knew of a miner who had a rifle, for Glick could think, even if he was insane on the subject of murder.

He determined to get that rifle.

He rode to a point where he could watch the shanty of the miner, and then crouched and waited till he saw him go back to his work.

Then leaving his horse in the woods, Glick crept toward the shanty.

He got there without being seen by anyone and got the coveted rifle.

Then he went back to his horse and moved around to a point where he could watch for Mike to come out of Carpenter's shanty.

"It's Mike first, an' then Tom," he muttered, as he clutched the weapon, which was an old-fashioned muzzle-loader.

But Glick forgot one thing.

He could only fire one shot, for he had no powder and bullets to reload it.

However, that never once entered his mind.

The time soon came for him to get in his murderous work.

He raised the rifle and took careful aim and then pressed the trigger.

As the report sounded Mike threw up his arms and dropped dead before Carpenter.

Glick uttered a fiendish laugh and tried to fire at Carpenter.

But a click was the only result.

With an oath he flung the rifle from him, and then mounting his horse started straight for the claim of Young Wild West.

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

Young Wild West had come over to the store that noon for the purpose of seeing the mining expert, as he was satisfied that they had developed things in the mine sufficiently to prove it to him that it was worth a hundred thousand dollars.

He had learned that the man lived at the store with his brother, who was the owner of it.

Wild had found him and invited him to come over and look at the mine before he was called by Mrs. Carpenter.

The mining expert had promised to come over in about half an hour, so the young deadshot had plenty of time to go around and see the miners in regard to the man Mike before he went back.

When he did get back he found that both Charlie and Jim were down in the mine and Hop Wah standing watch at the mouth of the shaft.

Our friends had succeeded in digging enough dirt away to satisfy them that there was a fortune in silver lying there.

But Wild had boasted that he was going to sell the mine for a hundred thousand dollars, and he meant to keep his word.

"We can't clean up a hundred thousand every day in the week," he thought, as he paused before the Chinaman.

He was just about to call his partners from below when he saw the man he wanted coming across the open space near by on a short cut from the smelter.

"I'll take a look at your strike now if you don't mind, Young Wild West," the expert said. "I won't be long in telling you how much you ought to get for the mine, I'll guarantee you. I have had so much experience that I can judge what a vein is the moment I see it."

"And set a value upon it, too, eh?" said Wild.

"Oh, yes; I can do that easily. Of course, the price I put on it would be what it would be worth to me."

"Exactly. Have you the power to buy the mine if you think it is worth a hundred thousand dollars?"

"Certainly I have the power. That is one of the parts of my business. But don't think your mine is worth a

hundred thousand dollars. The chances are that you have only struck the tail end of a drift. Sometimes the tail end of a drift that has been overlooked by the miners turns out the richest ore. I fancy that such is the case here."

"Well, just go down and look at the lead. My partners are down there. I'll call them."

He did call them and told them that the man from the smelter was coming down to see what the Straight Tip mine was worth to his concern.

Down went the man, Wild preparing to remain up, for he felt that it was just possible that Dan Glick might be around somewhere.

The mining expert, whose name was Clifford, was not down in the mine more than ten or fifteen minutes.

Then he came up in the bucket and Charlie and Jim were with him.

Wild did not show that he was anxious, though he could see by the looks of Jim and the scout that they were pleased mightily over something.

"You have struck a nice little vein of silver, Young Wild West," said Clifford, looking at the young deadshot seriously. "You said you expect to get a hundred thousand dollars for the mine?"

"Yes," was the reply, "and not a dollar less."

"All right. Here's a thousand dollars deposit. Write out a receipt for it with a two hours' option. I'll see that you get a draft on a Denver bank for the other ninety-nine thousand."

Wild wrote out the receipt and put the money in his pocket.

As Clifford started for the office of the company Cheyenne Charlie took off his hat and yelled:

"Hooray fur Young Wild West! He's jest cleaned up a hundred thousand dollars!"

"Take it cool, Charlie," said Wild. "It is all right. I am glad we came to Silver Bullet."

"So am I," chimed in Jim, who was as delighted as the scout was.

"An' yer kin bet your life I am, too!" echoed Charlie. Just then a pistol-shot rang out.

A bullet whizzed over their heads and hit the derrick. Then a horse galloped into view around the corner of their shanty.

Dan Glick was on the back of the animal, bare-headed and wild-eyed.

"You've got ter die, Young Wild West!" the maniac shouted, as he turned his horse and dashed straight toward them.

The three jumped behind the derrick and covered the villain.

"Stop right where you are, Dan Glick!" called out our hero, in a ringing voice. "You have come to the end of your rope!"

Crack—crack!

Glick fired at them twice and missed.

Then his horse came to a sudden stop and he was pitched over its head.

Bump!

He struck the bucket and then slid straight down into the shaft!

Our friends heard the dull thud as he struck below and then walked away from the spot.

"I feel easier now," said Jim Dart, as he went and got a drink of water. "Glick was one of the most persistent of the bad men that I ever came across. He went to his own death, though not intentionally. He would have killed us all if he could."

"I reckon he would," replied Cheyenne Charlie, "but he's done fur now. He's ther last of ther gang, I reckon."

"Well, we'll go over and make it known what happened to Glick," said Wild, and they started at once, leaving Hop at the shanty.

Just as they got over to the store they met Tom Carpenter.

"Mike's dead!" he said. "Dan Glick picked him off with a bullet a little while ago."

"That's too bad," answered Wild. "The fellow had it in his head that Glick was going to finish him. But, Carpenter, Dan Glick will never shoot another man!"

"Why, is he dead?" the miner asked.

"Yes."

"Did you drop him?"

"No, he went headfirst from the back of his horse down the shaft of the Straight Tip mine."

"It's too bad he didn't go under before he got a chance ter shoot Mike."

Carpenter shook his head sadly.

In the tavern Wild gave it out that Glick had met his death by being thrown from the back of his horse into the shaft of the mine.

He told how the villain had refused to stop with their revolvers staring him in the face, and that the horse had obeyed instead of him.

"He meant us to the last, but his bullets did not reach us," said Wild, in conclusion. "Now, then, everybody step up and have something on the strength of my Silver Scoop, for I have just cleaned up a hundred thousand dollars since we struck Silver Bullet!"

A deep silence followed the words.

There were only half a dozen men in the room, but they had been doing lots of talking when our friends came in.

They could hardly believe their own ears.

They all had something, however, and wished Young Wild West the best of luck.

Pretty soon Clifford came in with two strangers.

The strangers had just arrived in the stagecoach that came in a little after one o'clock.

"Here you are, Young Wild West!" he called out. "Here are two of the owners of the smelter. I have told them about the Straight Tip mine."

The expert then introduced the two men formally and there was a general shaking of hands.

After they had talked awhile Clifford produced a bank

draft for ninety-nine thousand dollars and showed it to Wild.

"There's your money," said he. "Now, if you'll just sign the papers everything will be all right."

"I'll do that," replied our hero. "Charlie always signs with me, for I am not of age, you know. He is my guardian in transactions of this kind."

The papers transferring the mine to the smelting company were soon signed and then Young Wild West got his check.

The company was to take possession at once, so an hour later our friends were quartered at the Silver Bullet Tavern.

They were going to leave the next day for Denver, where they wanted to transact a little business before going back home.

The next morning things were running very smoothly in Silver Bullet.

The body of Dan Glick had been removed from the mine and buried near the graves of those who had been his assistants in the effort to kill Young Wild West and his two partners and get possession of the Straight Tip mine.

Just before they left the camp Tom Carpenter came and told them that he had sold his mine for a good price, and that he was going with his wife and baby to California.

"I'm always goin' ter stick ter my word, Young Wild West," he said. "I'm goin' ter do right by my family an' never touch a drop of licker as long as I live."

Dr. Duck had sold out pretty well by this time, so he set out for the nearest railroad depot to get another stock of his wonderful medicine.

But Hop went away with two bottles of it without having had to pay for it.

Just what the Chinaman meant to do with the stuff no one knew.

But it was quite likely that he would use it in the place of whisky when he was not able to get any of the latter.

Our friends reached Denver and the draft was honored and the money placed in the bank to the credit of Young Wild West.

It had been a Silver Scoop, all right, and a hundred thousand had been cleaned up in a short time.

THE END.

Read "YOUNG WILD WEST AND THE OREGON OUTLAWS; or, ARIETTA AS A 'JUDGE,'" which will be the next number (184) of "Wild West Weekly."

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